

INFECTIOUS DISEASES 

Coronavirus COVID-19

– Latest Updates

Updated on 23 March at 16:30.

- At the beginning of the year, an epidemic caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19 began in China. Epidemics have developed widely around the world and in Europe.
- So far, over 290,000 cases in total have been diagnosed globally. A total of 186 countries have reported infections.
- THL is monitoring and assessing the situation together with the European Centre for Disease Prevention (ECDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

See also:

- [Frequently asked questions about coronavirus COVID-19](#)
- [Information about the disease: Coronavirus COVID-19](#)

The situation in Finland

- The risk of infection has increased throughout Finland. In recent days, an increasing number of coronavirus infections have been diagnosed in the Uusimaa region.
- All infection chains are no longer known. Efforts are still being made to keep track of infection chains in order

to slow down the progression of the epidemic.

- Finland is preparing for a wider epidemic. The speed at which the epidemic develops will most likely vary across the country.
- The Government, together with the President of the Republic, have declared a state of emergency in Finland due to the coronavirus situation. The measures outlined by the Government will be implemented in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act, the Emergency Powers Act and other relevant legislation. The measures include the closure of schools, educational institutions and universities, restrictions to public meetings and gatherings, mobility and visits to health care units, and increases to social welfare and health care capacity. In addition, border traffic will be restricted as of 19 March.
- These measures aim to slow down the progression of the epidemic so that health care services will have the capacity to provide care for the affected. These measures will remain in force until 13 April 2020.
- [Measures outlined by the Government.](#)

Infections diagnosed in Finland

- By 23 March, a total of **700** laboratory-confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) have been diagnosed in Finland. This figure is based on laboratory-confirmed figures collected manually by THL directly from the hospital districts.
- By 23 March, a total of 490 cases have been reported to the National Infectious Diseases Register.
- Of the cases reported to the register, 61% are men and 39% women.
- Most of the COVID-19 cases diagnosed

in Finland have been mild.

- There are currently 50 hospitalised patients, 13 of whom are in intensive care.
- There has been one confirmed death caused by coronavirus in Finland.
- Several hospitalised patients have already recovered and been discharged.
- Finnish hospitals are well prepared for examining and treating coronavirus infections in isolation.

On the reporting of infections and sample numbers

- It has been possible to report laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases to the National Infectious Diseases Register since 19 March 2020. All laboratories have not yet provided up-to-date information.
- Laboratories will attempt to start using the National Infectious Diseases Register during this week so that the data in the register will match the case numbers of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- Initially, there will be delays and regional variations in notifications and in the reporting of figures.
- The actual number of COVID-19 infections in Finland is likely higher than reported since not all people with mild symptoms are tested.
- Hospital districts and THL are working together to ensure that the National Infectious Diseases Register is up to date as quickly as possible.

Corona sampling in Finland

- By 23 March, data on over 10,500 patients meeting the sampling criteria have been tested in Finland. There are still delays in reporting and recording samples.
- The latest figures describing the

number of infections are not fully comparable with the previous figures as sampling criteria have been changed.

- Hospital districts are testing for coronavirus according to their resources, following THL's instructions.
- Samples are primarily taken from patients with severe respiratory tract infection symptoms and from healthcare and social welfare personnel. At the moment, testing for COVID-19 is predominantly being carried out on patients and those groups of people whose health requires monitoring or if it is important for their line of work.
- Samples from people with mild symptoms returning from trips are still taken at the discretion of a physician. People who have contracted COVID-19, but only have mild symptoms can stay home to recover. Asymptomatic people are generally not being tested.
- In Finland, coronavirus tests are currently done in the public and private sector, in a total of five laboratories. Laboratories have increased their testing capacity to the best of their ability.
- THL is also testing samples collected for influenza laboratory based sample monitoring for coronavirus. So far, the samples have proved negative.

The situation in Europe

- In Europe, the COVID-19 epidemic is widespread in many European countries.
- A total of over 150,000 cases have been diagnosed in Europe.
- The majority of cases have been diagnosed in Italy, Spain, Germany, France and Switzerland.
- To slow down the epidemic, many European countries have closed their

borders and issued widespread limitations on mobility and the activities of the public and private sector.

- A large number of infections have also been reported in the Nordic countries, a total of nearly 6000 cases. By 22 March, 1906 cases of coronavirus have been reported in Sweden with 21 deaths.
- We are particularly monitoring and assessing the situation closely in the Nordic countries.
- A summary of cases diagnosed in Europe [on the ECDC website](#).
- [Numbers of cases in the European countries](#) (WHO)

The situation with the epidemic outside Europe

- The epidemic is widely underway in many countries.
- In the originating area in China, the epidemic appears to have subsided.
- So far, almost 13,000 people have died globally. The vast majority of infected people have recovered.
- [Number of cases in different countries](#) (WHO)

International risk assessment

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus epidemic a pandemic on 11 March 2020.
- The ECDC and WHO regularly update their assessment of the situation. THL is monitoring the international situation, developing guidelines for health care and laboratories, assessing the health risks related to the coronavirus and drawing up assessments of how the situation with the virus may develop.
- [COVID-19 \(ECDC\)](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Guidelines for tourists

- Due to the exceptional situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs advises avoiding all travel for the time being.
- Finnish travellers are advised to return to Finland as soon as possible.
- Finns and permanent residents of Finland returning from abroad are advised to live in conditions that correspond to quarantine for a period of two weeks after their return.
- [Number of cases in different countries \(WHO\)](#)

Media enquiries

We are currently receiving a very large number of interview requests regarding coronavirus.

Please send all interview requests by **email** to [info\(at\)thl.fi](mailto:info@thl.fi) or by **telephone** to +358 29 524 6161. The telephone number serves customers on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. After 4 p.m., requests can be sent by e-mail.



WHAT'S NEW

20 Mar 2020

[Instructions for passengers arriving in Finland: Avoid close contact with others for 14 days](#)

19 Mar 2020

[The Corona Epidemic Modelling: Limiting human contacts affects the duration of the epidemic and the number of daily infections](#)

17 Mar 2020

[Coronavirus can cause anxiety in adults and children alike - How to take care of yourself and your loved ones](#)

13 Mar 2020

Stay home if you have mild symptoms and seek medical help only if your symptoms are severe

12 Mar 2020

Coronavirus infection now a risk in many countries – efforts being made to slow the start of the epidemic in Finland

[See all news on Coronavirus](#) 

MORE INFORMATION

- [Information about the disease: novel coronavirus \(in Finnish\)](#)
- [Frequently asked questions about the novel coronavirus \(in Finnish\)](#)

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