

INFECTIOUS DISEASES 

Coronavirus COVID-19

– Latest Updates

Updated on 26 March at 18:50.

- 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, nearly 420,000 cases have been diagnosed globally. A total of 196 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.
- Measures implemented by the Government have included the closure of schools and educational institutions, restrictions on public meetings and mobility, an increase in social and health care capacities and the restriction of border traffic. The policies are in force until 13 April 2020.
- Starting 27 March, the Government will also restrict traffic and movement between the Uusimaa region and Finland's other regions. The Government Decree on the use of powers laid down in the Emergency Powers Act was submitted to the Parliament for discussion on 25 March. The restrictions will be in force until 19 April 2020.

Infections diagnosed in Finland

- By 26 March, a total of 958 laboratory-confirmed cases of the new 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.
- A total of 894 cases have been reported to the National Infectious Disease Register by 26 March.
- Of the cases reported to the register, 54 % are men and 46 % women.
- Most of the COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Finland have been mild.
- There are currently 96 hospitalised patients, 24 of whom are in intensive

care.

- There have been four deaths in Finland that have been determined to have resulted from the coronavirus. Three of these deaths have happened in the Helsinki University Hospital catchment area.
- 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 26 March, nearly 16,000 samples 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 eight 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 220,000 cases have been diagnosed in Europe.
- The majority of cases have been diagnosed in Italy. The number of coronavirus cases elsewhere in Europe is growing and, in particular, the situation is growing worse in

Spain.

- Many European countries have closed their borders in order to prevent or slow down the epidemic and have imposed extensive restrictions on mobility and public and private sector activities.
- A large number of infections have also been reported in the Nordic countries, a total of more than 7,800 cases. For example, over 2,500 cases of coronavirus have been reported in Sweden by 25 March with 42 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, more than 18,000 people have died of the virus 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 \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(WHO\)](#)

Guidelines for tourists

- Due to the exceptional situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs urges that all travel abroad be avoided until further notice.
- Finnish travellers are advised to return to Finland as soon as possible.
- Information on the coronavirus, its prevention and treatment instructions will be distributed to all those arriving in the country.
- Finns returning from abroad and those permanently living in Finland are encouraged to maintain a safe distance to other people and to remain in quarantine-like conditions for 14 days after their journey (home quarantine).
- [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

26 Mar 2020

[Current outlook of the corona epidemic in Finland: About 11,300](#)

people need hospital care and 3,600 of them need intensive care

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

[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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