



# NATIONAL COMMISSIONER OF THE ICELANDIC POLICE

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL  
PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT



Applies to: The media, [almannavarnir.is](http://almannavarnir.is), Administration and Chief Epidemiologist's contacts.

## STATUS REPORT

Date: 23.03.2020

Time: 17:00

Location: Coordination Centre / Directorate of Health / Chief Epidemiologist

Emergency / Distress Phase: COVID-19

### Event description

Every effort is being made to distribute information and advice to the public, to public bodies and to companies. All instructions can be found on the [Directorate of Health](http://Directorate of Health) website, the [National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police](http://National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police) website and the [covid.is](http://covid.is) information website.

### Advice regarding Covid-19

#### Ways to get advice from nurses:

#### Serious illness:

- Phone the 1700 number outside working hours
- Call your health-care centre during working hours

#### Lesser illness:

- Communication through My Pages on Heilsuvera.is
- Net chat on heilsuvera.is - 8:00–22:00h

The Medical Hotline (Læknavaktin) and Heilsuvera are under a great deal of strain. We urge everyone to read the information available on the above-mentioned websites.

The number of infected persons is now 588, including 249 domestic infections. The origins of 144 infections are unclear. A total of 10.301 samples have been taken, including 183 in the last 24 hours. According to information from the National Hospital (Landspítalinn) 51 individuals have recuperated and 7 individuals have been discharged from the hospital.

### 23th Press briefing on 23. March 2020

Chief Superintendent for the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police Víðir Reynisson led the meeting.

Chief Epidemiologist Þórólfur Guðnason gave an overview of the situation regarding the COVID-19 outbreak in Iceland, stating that over the last 24 hours, diagnosed samples were unusually few, but explaining that daily variations were to be expected. About 50% of diagnosed samples are from individuals in quarantine. 13 patients are being treated at the National Hospital, but no one is in intensive care at the moment. Guðnason estimates that the outbreak is growing, but not by much, according to the latest numbers – but development over few days is needed to give a better analysis.

According to the latest version of the predictive model, the outbreak is expected to crest in the middle of April. Gudnason's conclusion: We are doing the right things. The average increase of patients in Iceland is among the lowest, in comparison to other European states. We are diagnosing a number of people already in quarantine and we are taking the appropriate measures. A shortage of viral swabs is a worry. We now have about 2000 swabs, and we are taking samples from those already sick, but leaving out those who have mild or no symptoms. Gudnason noted that registration for quarantined people has now been set up at [www.heilsuvera.is](http://www.heilsuvera.is), where people can also receive a certificate confirming their status. Those who do not have an e-ID can use other means. See <https://www.covid.is/announcements> for further details. English and Polish versions are already available.

**Director of Health Alma D. Möller** began by addressing people in hospitals and homes for the elderly, where visits have been restricted. She emphasised that their interests were being guarded by these measures. Dr. Möller praised those who are contributing to unity and positive attitude, and also gave praise to supermarkets doing home-delivery and other businesses that come up with imaginative solutions. Dr. Möller also discussed the order by the Directorate of Health to hospitals to postpone selective operations so that COVID-19 patients can be prioritized – as well as giving vital service to other patients. All urgent cases will be taken care of and specialists must take well-grounded decisions based on their patient's best interest. Dr. Möller encouraged medical professionals to sign up as support staff, and she welcomed medical and nurse students into that group, adding that her office might need to assess the need to issue temporary medical licences for students. Dr. Möller also discussed the Blood Bank, which must be able to ensure its operations. Supply of blood and blood related products must be ensured, and Dr. Möller encouraged blood donors to book a session through [www.blodbankinn.is](http://www.blodbankinn.is)

**Unnur Sverrisdóttir, chief of the Directorate of Labour** gave an overview of the actions taken due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Various changes were made towards the end of February/beginning of March, including having staff work from home and closing of various offices. All service is now conducted through telephone and via the internet. At the Directorate's website, [www.vinnumalastofnun.is](http://www.vinnumalastofnun.is) people will be able to apply for unemployment benefits as their employment is reduced, due to contracted operations in their workplace. Instructions are available in Icelandic, English and Polish. Sverrisdóttir expressed her hope that this situation would not last for a long time, and that it was very important to maintain the relationships between employers and employees so that knowledge and experience would not be lost. General applications for unemployment benefits have also been made more simple and easy for applicants. Contractors and freelancer can also apply through "Mínar Síður", with a certificate from the Tax authorities regarding their loss of revenues.

#### **Press briefings over the weekend:**

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, **Chief Superintendent for the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police Víðir Reynisson, and Director of Health Alma D. Möller** gave an overview of the situation regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. Pall Mattiasson, Director of the National Hospital also gave an overview of operations at the hospital.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Chief Superintendent Vidir Reynisson and **Chief Epidemiologist Þórólfur Guðnason** gave an overview of the situation. With a focus on sports, Larus L. Blondal, president of the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland talked about the challenges and tasks of the sports movement in Iceland in regards to the COVID-19 outbreak.

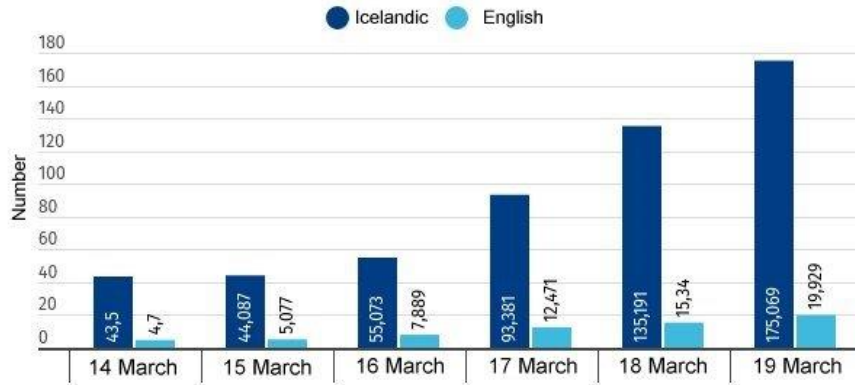
#### **Information sharing**

##### **The COVID.is website**

Statistical information about the disease are updated once a day and published at 13.00 at covid.is.

The website contains information about the measures that have been taken in Iceland due to the COVID-19 disease. The website also contains various numerical information. The website is in constant development. It is currently available in Icelandic and English. The Polish translation is about to go live. It is now possible to view and print various [posters that have been published](#).

## Clicks on Covid.is statistical pages



**546.000**

have viewed  
the Icelandic site



**65.000**

have viewed  
the English site

### Upcoming:

- Press conferences will be held every day on line at 14:03h.
- The next COVID-19 coordination meeting will be held on XXXXXXXX

### Consultation process and various information, including

- **All Icelandic residents who have been abroad and are returning home on 19 March or later will have to go into quarantine for 14 days.**  
[See further information on the Directorate of Health website.](#)
- Communications with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the City of Reykjavík and the Multicultural Information Centre on translations and distribution of information to immigrants.
- [Instructions sent to local community libraries.](#)
- Communications with the Icelandic Disability Alliance, an umbrella organisation of 43 associations with a total of 30,000 members that will distribute information to around 10,000 individuals through social media and a website.
- More and more people have been contacting health-care workers through the heilsuvera.is website, where it is possible to sign in with electronic identification certificates and communicate with health-care workers. Heilsuvera received around 879 inquiries through its net chat in the last 24 hours.
- The Icelandic Tourist Board has published information about hospitality establishments that are prepared to receive guests in need of quarantining. [See their information website.](#)
- The Icelandic Confederation of Labour has published [COVID-19 questions and answers.](#)
- Information on the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority's website regarding [The Coronavirus and availability of feed and fertiliser](#)
- According to Isavia, the total number of passengers passing through Keflavik airport in the last 7 days has decreased considerably. For example, 2,960 passengers from the United States passed through the airport on 12 March, but only 525 Americans passed through the airport on 18 March. A total of 243 Belgians passed through the airport on 12 March, but none on 18 March.

**Important information for those on the priority list who need to use this emergency measure for their children who are in the care of home day-care providers, in preschool, 1st and 2nd grade of primary school, as well as leisure time solutions for the same age groups.**

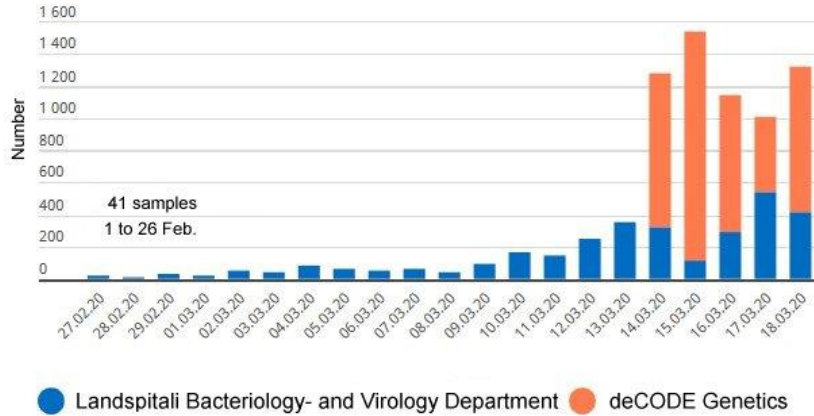
- Due to the circumstances, the schools cannot start operating according to the priority lists until Monday 23 March. Due to the nature of the problem, this is a very complicated project and must be done well.
- We therefore ask parents and other guardians to please show patience under these unprecedented circumstances, until Monday. We would also like to repeat that this is an emergency measure and we urge everyone to make use of, as much as possible, the measures already taken by the school.



### COVID-19 in Iceland - Statistics

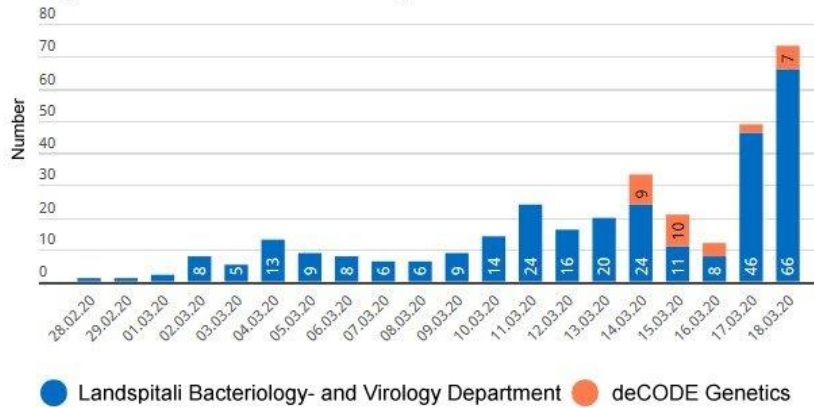
Updated daily at 11:00 hrs

#### Number of samples per day



● Landspítali Bacteriology- and Virology Department ● deCODE Genetics

#### Fjöldi smitaðra eftir dögum

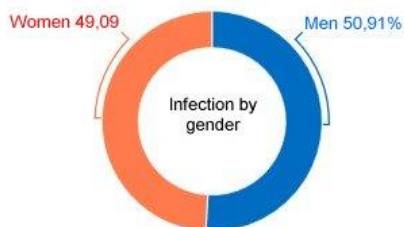


● Landspítali Bacteriology- and Virology Department ● deCODE Genetics

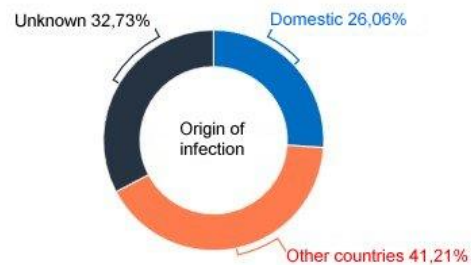
#### Total

-  **330** confirmed infections
-  **3.718** quarantined
-  **330** in isolation
-  **532** have finished quarantine
-  **7.833** samples
-  **3** in hospital

#### Number of infected by gender



#### Origin of infection

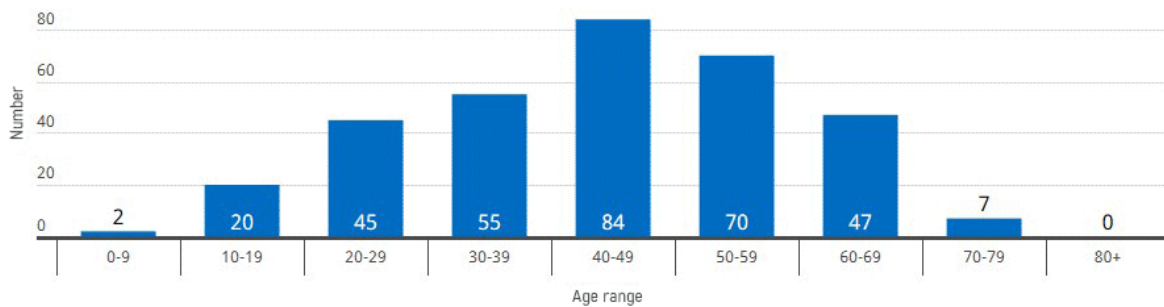


## Infections / quarantine by district



	Infections	Quarantine
Austurland	0	22
Höfuðborgarsvæðið	287	2595
Norðurland eystra	2	177
Norðurland vestra	1	238
Suðurland	24	462
Suðurnes	12	142
Vestfirðir	0	17
Vesturland	0	49
Óstaðsett	4	19
Útlönd	0	4

## Number of infected individuals by age



## Coronavirus – Global spread

According to Johns Hopkins, 222,642 individual cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed today and 9,115 individuals have died. 84,506 individuals have already recovered from the illness. There has been a boom in the virus' distribution throughout Europe. The ECDC has raised its risk assessment to a risk of a moderate to high threat to public health. Cf. the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) (ECDC) website for information on the development in each country. Cf. the ECDC risk assessment.

### The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Consular Service

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Consular Service has expanded its telephone-answering service and response to written inquiries.

Icelanders who are travelling abroad are urged to register through the Consular Service's database at the Government's website [www.utn.is](http://www.utn.is) It is also possible to contact them through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Facebook page.

- There are currently 6400 individuals registered through the Consular Service's Facebook page, who are returning home today or later. The Consular Service has replied to well over 2000 inquiries since 14 March. [See the travel advisory information on the Ministry's website. Ráðleggingar til Íslendinga erlendis frá 16. mars.](#) The Consular Service answers inquiries through Facebook messages, via email at [hjalp@utn.is](mailto:hjalp@utn.is) and over the telephone number 545-0-112.