



# NATIONAL COMMISSIONER OF THE ICELANDIC POLICE

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL  
PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY



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

## STATUS REPORT

Date: 18.03.2020

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 Department of Civil Protection of 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 have been 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 250, including 67 domestic infections.

A total of 6,510 samples have been taken, including 291 in the last 24 hours.

### Press conference on 18 March 2020

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

**Chief Epidemiologist Þórólfur Guðnason** discussed the incubation period of the disease and said that, as a rule, individuals who are found to be infected show symptoms for two weeks and are symptomless for one week. After that time the individual can be safely said to be free of the disease. The opinion of the health-care authorities is that people can only get the virus once – that they cannot be infected more than once.

**Director of Health Alma S. Möller** described the situation within the health-care system: Health-care services now revolve around COVID-19 on the one hand, and regular and necessary services on the other. As a rule, the health-care

clinics are coping very well. The Health Care Institution of North Iceland in Húsavík has been under a great deal of strain, but has managed to reinforce the service, add more staff and plan its services a few days ahead. Medical transport services have not experienced any problems. Preparations at Akureyri Hospital for receiving patients are going well. Everything is going well at the National University Hospital, but the work-load has been heavy. The Director of Health stresses that the virus cannot be allowed to take over everything and asks the public not to deny themselves health-care services. Distance health-care services are also available and are in constant development. Sampling swabs are still available in the country and more have been ordered.

**Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Gissur Pétursson** gave a brief of important issues regarding social and welfare services and services for vulnerable groups in Icelandic society. There are frontline care workers working in social services, often under challenging circumstances that have become even more challenging under the current conditions in society. Understaffing resulting in difficulties in rendering services to vulnerable groups, such as in community residences, residential homes for the disabled and similar, must be avoided. Mr Pétursson revealed that the Minister of Social Affairs and Children, the Minister of Transport and Local Government and the Chairman of the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities have signed a statement of cooperation on measures to be taken in order to address the challenges faced by state institutions, social services and others rendering services to vulnerable groups due to COVID-19. The statement launches a wide-spread collaboration between the state, local authorities, professional bodies and stakeholders around the country, in order to ensure safety and necessary services for those who need it the most, including people with disabilities, the elderly and children and families. A response team to serve vulnerable groups has also been established in collaboration with the Commissioner of the Icelandic Police's Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management. The team will systematically work to lessen the interruption in services, in close collaboration with those who protect the interests of and/or serve vulnerable groups. The team has the task of gathering and sharing information, evaluating situations that may arise and, as the case may be, respond to the effects of COVID-19 on important service systems all over the country, e.g. if the situation should arise that basic services cannot be rendered to specific groups or individuals for longer or shorter periods. Comments and inquiries to the response team can be sent to the email address [vidbragd@frn.is](mailto:vidbragd@frn.is).

## Information sharing

### The COVID.is website

Statistical information about the disease are updated once a day and published just after noon at [www.covid.is](http://www.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. A translation into Polish is in progress.

### Upcoming:

- Press conferences will be held every day at 14:03h.
- The next COVID-19 coordination meeting will be held on Thursday 19 March at 9:00h.

### Consultation process and various information, including

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has issued [Lykilskilaboð og forvarnaraðgerðir vegna COVID-19 í skólum](#), which is an Icelandic translation of the World Health Organization, Unicef and Red Cross' Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools.
- Today, the civil protection authorities, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the City of Reykjavík met to discuss the distribution of information to immigrants, and issues concerning children and young people.

- 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 900 inquiries through its net chat in the last 24 hours.
- Welfare services reserve team: It is foreseeable that service providers rendering important services to vulnerable groups will soon have to handle staff shortages due to COVID-19. Therefore, the Ministries concerned and the Association of Local Authorities, in collaboration with the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police's Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management, have decided to follow the example of the health-care authorities which recently set up a health-care workers' reserve team. A special registration form has now been opened at the website of the Ministry of Social Affairs, so that persons with knowledge and experience of welfare services who are willing to go temporarily to work rendering services to vulnerable groups, either for the state or local communities, at short notice.

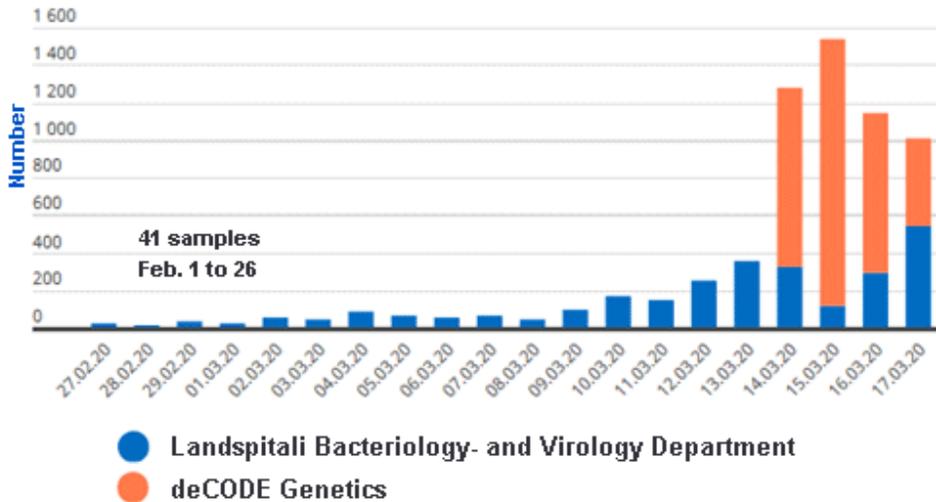
[See the news release at the Ministry of Social Affairs' website.](#)



# COVID-19 in Iceland - Statistics

Last updated at 11:00 hrs on 18 March

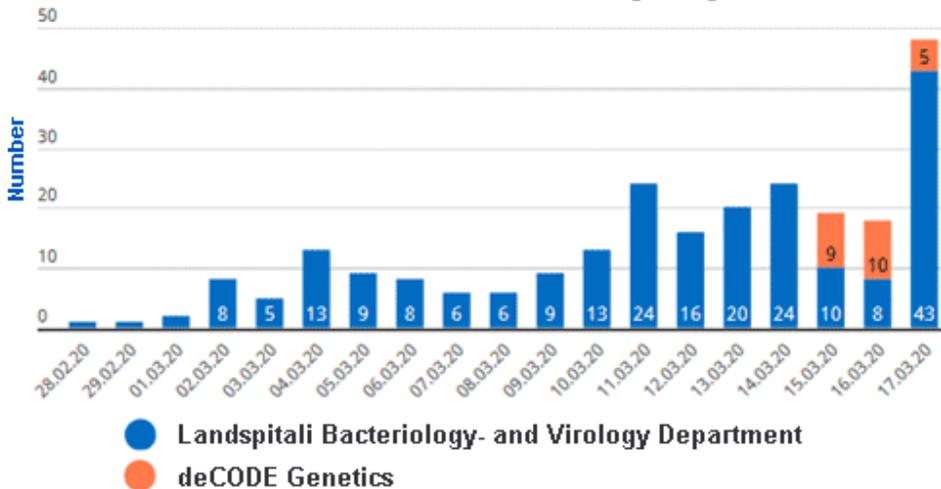
## Number of samples by day



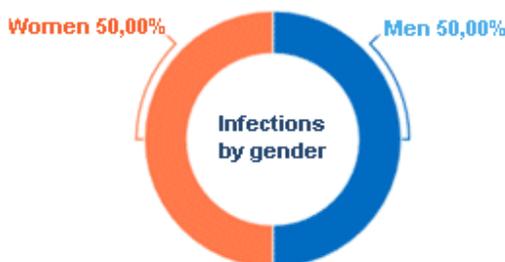
## Total

-  **250**  
confirmed infections
-  **2.422**  
quarantined
-  **250**  
in isolation
-  **6.510**  
samples
-  **3**  
in hospital
-  **457**  
have finished quarantine

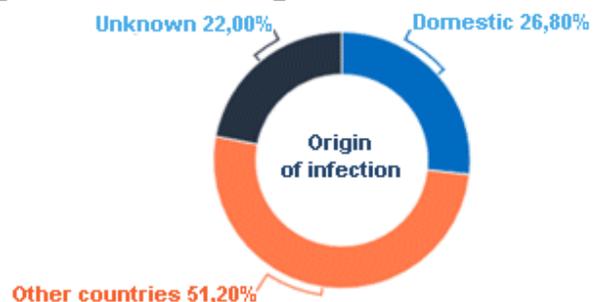
## Number of infected individuals by day



## Number of infected individuals by gender



## Origin of infection

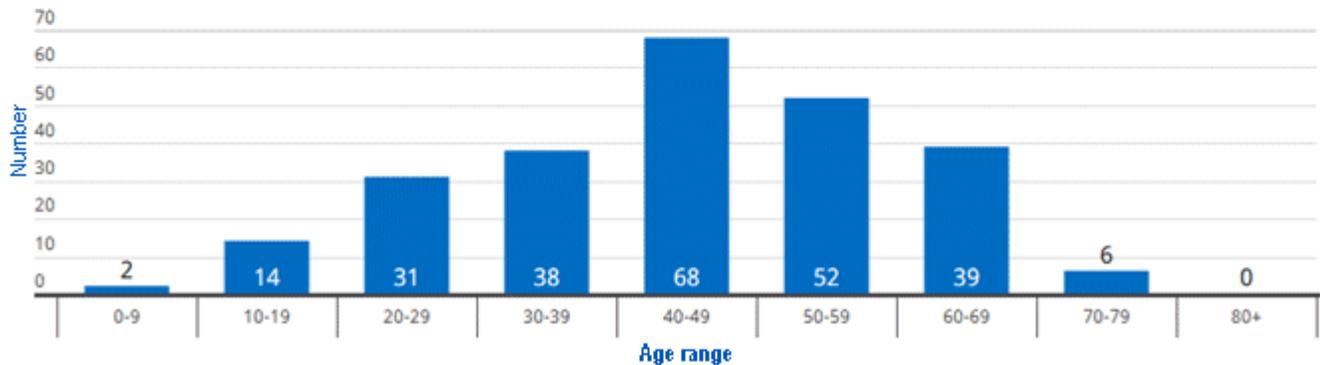


## Infections / quarantine by district



	Infections	Quarantine
Austurland	0	5
Höfuðborgarsvæðið	224	1782
Norðurland eystra	1	100
Norðurland vestra	1	3
Suðurland	16	376
Suðurnes	5	108
Vestfirðir	0	13
Vesturland	0	25
Óstaðsett	3	6
Útlönd	0	4

## Number of infected individuals by age



Since numbers for pictograms are updated individually it is normal for them not to add up perfectly. Nevertheless the figures should provide a good general idea of the development.

## Coronavirus – Global spread

According to Johns Hopkins, 207,518 individual cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed today and 8,248 individuals have died. 82,104 individuals have already recovered from the illness. There has been an explosion in the distribution of the virus in Europe, especially in Italy, Spain and Germany. 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)

- Of the 9 thousand individuals who have registered in the Consular Service's database since it was opened, a little under 7 thousand are still abroad. Just under 1000 individuals have booked flights home in the next two days.
- 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. It is also possible to contact them through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Facebook page.