

## The Dutch covid-19 situation

Last update: 11 March 2021, 13:00

Most recent changes in red.

### Dutch measures

- The Dutch measures still amount to a strict lockdown. People should only go outside (1) to shop for essentials, (2) to get medical care for or to care for others or animals, (3) to get some fresh air or to go to work/school if working or learning remotely is not possible.
- The aim of all of these measures is to continue to limit contact as much as possible in order to (1) reduce the current infection rate, (2) delay the spread of the original and new coronavirus variants and (3) prevents the new variants' entry into the Netherlands (as much as possible).

### Vaccinations

- After the Dutch vaccination programme started on 6 January, admittedly later than most other European countries, the Netherlands is now accelerating its programme.
- The number of available vaccines is increasing, and we are using the doses as efficiently as possible.
- On 14 March, about 1,4 million first injections had been administered, and approximately 500.000 people have already received their second injection.  
<https://www.rivm.nl/covid-19-vaccinatie/cijfers-vaccinatieprogramma> and  
<https://coronadashboard.rijksoverheid.nl/landelijk/vaccinaties>
- Most of these vaccinations were administered to medical personnel and people working in other health care sectors (i.e. elderly/long-term care homes). We have also started vaccinating elderly people living at home (60-90 years old) as well as mental healthcare personnel and clients.
- The first results and numbers show that vaccines are effective in reducing the spread of the coronavirus among groups that have been vaccinated. Elderly homes are an example of this, which were previously potential hotspots for the spread of the virus.
- In the beginning, these vaccinations had all been with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. On 12 February, the Netherlands also began administering the AstraZeneca vaccine. We will start using the Janssen vaccine as soon as possible.
- The Netherlands has temporarily suspended the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine while further research into side effects has been done.

### Testing and test sequencing

- The Netherlands considers testing an important measure in combating the coronavirus.

- Recently, test capacity has been extended with so-called 'XL-testing locations'. Large-scale testing provides us with the vital information that is needed to continually monitor the epidemiological situation in our country.
- We are of course fully transparent about this information and readily share it with (neighboring) countries (like today).
- Extensive testing allows us to act sooner to reduce the spread of the virus. We are continually expanding our testing capacity and facilities.
- Additionally, the Netherlands is actively sequencing positive test results in laboratories in order to surveil and research the spread of different variants of the virus. For example, sequencing allowed us to estimate the spread of the British variant of the virus.
- At the beginning of the pandemic, the RIVM was sequencing approximately 400 random positive samples per week. This will be gradually increased to up to 1500 samples per week, which is approximately 5% of all positive tests (rough estimate, depending on weekly amount of tests).
- More Field Lab test-events have taken place, such as a dance event and a concert. Attendees were divided in to five 'bubbles' of 250 persons, each following slightly different rules (i.e. one group with masks and one without). Everyone had to be tested negative beforehand, and they will be tested again five days after the event. These test events provide us with information about the possibilities for organizing events in a safe way.
- The government is working on creating an app through which people can present proof of a negative test result. From April onwards, this will be used to allow people to access cultural institutions and (smaller-scale) events.

#### The numbers: recent trends

- There has been an increase in the number of positive tests last week (10-16 March). There was also an increase in the total number of tests that were taken. The percentage of positive tests dropped from 8% to 7,7%.
- Between 10-16 March, 1234 people were admitted into hospital and 268 people were put into IC.
- The R value rose slightly to 1,06 (data from 1 March)
- The strict lockdown and curfew measures have proven to be effective in reducing the spread of the virus. However, the spread of the British variant of the coronavirus has dampened the decline of these numbers. If it wasn't for our strict lockdown measures, there would have been a large increase in the number of infections.
- Despite our best efforts, such as a strict 'double-lock' testing policy regarding travel from for example the UK, the British/117 variant was able to gain ground in the Netherlands.
- Latest data from test surveillance (sequencing) shows that in week 8 of this year the share of the British variant has grown to approx. 75%. The South African and Brazilian variants are much less widespread. Since the start of this year, a total of 87 cases of the South African variant have been discovered during test sequencing. Only 2 cases of the Brazilian variant have been found in test sequencing.
- The R-value of the British variant is about 30% higher than that of the 'classic' variant.

- Nevertheless, the Dutch government's strict measures – and the willingness of the Dutch population to adhere to them – will continue as long as the epidemiological situation requires it.
- [Situatie in Nederland blijft zorgelijk | RIVM](#)