

## The Dutch covid-19 situation

Last update: 4 March 2021, 13:00

Most recent changes in red.

### Dutch measures

- On 23 February, the government announced the extension of lockdown and curfew measures until 15 March. In view of the societal and psychological impact of the ongoing measures, there were some careful relaxations similar to those in surrounding countries.
- The government has extended the travel ban that was already in place regarding (among others) the UK, South Africa and parts of South America until the 1<sup>st</sup> of April.
- The 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 28 February, just over 1 million first injections had been administered, and approximately 331.000 people 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 vaccinated elderly people living at home (60-90 years old) as well as mental healthcare personnel and clients.
- 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.

### 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).
- **On Monday, 15 February, the first 'Field Lab' event took place: an experimental congress with 500 attendees. All attendees were tested beforehand and the test of course had to be negative. The event proved to be successful, there were no infections among the participants. In the coming weeks, more test events will happen in the cultural sector and sports.**
- **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**

- **The last weeks we have seen a slightly negative trend. Compared to last week, there was a 7% increase in the number of positive tests. Yesterday, there were 4032 new positive tests. From 24 February to 2 March, there were almost 32.000 infections (about 30.000 in the previous week), as well as 1133 new cases in hospital of which 224 were intensive care (1120 / 243 last week). 309 people passed away, compared to 418 in the previous week.**
- 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 has gained ground in the Netherlands.
- **The latest hard evidence from the end of January demonstrates that approximately 23% of all infections were of the British variant. Estimates show that this share is unfortunately steadily growing, and that, similar to other countries, it could become the dominant variant in the Netherlands. Other variants (South African, Brazilian) are slowly increasing but nowhere near the extent of the British variant.**
- The R-value of the British variant is higher than that of the 'classic' variant: **1,26 versus 1,02 on 12 February. The combined R-value rose to 1,14 (data of 12 February).**

- Nevertheless, the Dutch government's strict measures – and the willingness of the Dutch population to adhere to them (after the riots the situation is calm) – will continue as long as the epidemiological situation requires it.
- <https://www.rivm.nl/nieuws/voorzicht-nog-niet-goed>