



Opetus- ja
kulttuuri-
ministeriö



Terveyden ja
hyvinvoinnin laitos

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Effective as of 1 June 2020

Guidelines on the prevention of coronavirus infections at public events and gatherings and in the use of public spaces

Legal bases and competences

In accordance with section 8 of the Communicable Diseases Act (1227/2016), the Regional State Administrative Agencies coordinate and supervise the prevention of infections in their territory. The joint municipal authorities for hospital districts guide and support municipalities as well as healthcare and social welfare in the prevention of communicable diseases, work regionally to develop the diagnostics and treatment of communicable diseases, and investigate epidemics together with municipalities. The Regional State Administrative Agencies and the joint municipal authorities for hospital districts within each Agency's operating area collaborate in the prevention of communicable diseases. The Regional State Administrative Agencies make the administrative decisions laid down in this Act by making use of the expertise of the joint municipal authority of the hospital district, the specific catchment area, and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare.

Under section 9 of the Communicable Diseases Act (1227/2016), municipalities are responsible for organising the work to combat of communicable diseases referred to in this Act within their area as part of public health work, as laid down in the Primary Health Care Act (66/1972), in the Health Care Act and in this Act. In this Act, the actions to combat communicable diseases encompass the prevention, early detection and monitoring of communicable diseases, measures needed to investigate or prevent an epidemic, and the examination, treatment and medical rehabilitation of persons who have a communicable disease or are suspected of having one, as well as the prevention of treatment-related infections.

Purpose of the instructions

On 6 May 2020, the Government issued a Government Resolution on a plan for a

hybrid strategy to manage the COVID-19 crisis. Based on the Government Resolution, special arrangements may also be made when organising public events of more than 50 persons in indoor and enclosed outdoor spaces, provided that safety can be ensured by limiting the number of visitors, maintaining safe distances and providing hygiene instructions. These guidelines serve to help in organising public events, gatherings and meetings in indoor and enclosed outdoor spaces safely during the COVID-19 epidemic. By following the guidelines, it is possible to prevent infections and reduce the number of people exposed to the infection. The guidelines also apply to the use of public premises opened on 1 June 2020.

The guidelines describe the general conditions for preventing COVID-19 infections and limiting the number of people exposed to the infection. In line with conditions set out in the guidelines, the organisers of events and activities may draw up more detailed recommendations of their own for each situation, activity or event. Large venues may simultaneously include several smaller groups of people who are not in close contact with each other.

Under section 9 of the Communicable Diseases Act, local and regional authorities responsible for communicable diseases may assist in drawing up recommendations for such situations. Before making a decision to organise an event or activities and launch it, the organisers of the event or activities must plan and assess the potential for preventing infections.

Event organisers acting as an employer are issued separate provisions on the obligations for the protection of employees. For those working in public premises, the measures are based on a risk assessment made by the employer. Occupational healthcare supports employers in the risk assessment.

Those who have symptoms must not attend public events, general gatherings or public spaces

Coronavirus causes a respiratory infection. The symptoms may include a cough, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath (dyspnoea), muscle pain (myalgia), abdominal symptoms and headache (<https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates/coronavirus-covid-19>). No one with symptoms of illness may be present in any public event, general gathering or public space where there are other people at the same time.

Risk groups

During the epidemic, it is recommended that those who belong to the risk groups avoid close contacts. For this reason, taking part in public events, general gatherings or activities organised in public spaces are not recommended for people belonging to a risk group. If participation is essential, the recommendations on safe distancing and hygiene mentioned in these guidelines must be observed.

Groups at risk of serious illness from COVID-19: <https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious->

diseases/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates/coronavirus-covid-19/risk-groups-for-coronavirus-disease

Avoid unnecessary physical contact

COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through droplets <https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates/coronavirus-covid-19>). To prevent infections, avoid unnecessary physical contact

- To avoid close contacts, safe distances between people in public events, general gatherings and public spaces must be ensured: the number of attendees must be limited so that a distance of at least 1 to 2 metres between each person is ensured.
- In situations where queues may arise, people should be reminded of and advised on how to maintain safe distancing. Safe distancing can be ensured, for example, by having an adequate number of staff members to guide people, by introducing distancing signs and by preventing long queues from forming by making arrangements for how and when participants arrive and assemble.
- There is a higher risk of contamination by droplets in situations such as joint singing events and group sports activities, so the importance of safe distancing must be emphasised in such situations.

Good hand hygiene and respiratory and cough hygiene prevents infections

COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through droplets <https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates/coronavirus-covid-19>). Proper hand hygiene and respiratory and cough practices prevent infections. To raise awareness, it is recommended that information material on the right practices be distributed to both staff members and participants at events.

- Hand sanitizers should be used when entering indoor or enclosed outdoor spaces. Alcohol-based sanitizers must be readily available.
- In addition, always wash your hands with soap and water before meals, after sneezing or coughing, or if your hands are visibly unclean. Use disposable paper towels to dry your hands. If you cannot wash your hands, use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- When sneezing or coughing, place a disposable handkerchief to cover your mouth and dispose of it immediately after use. If you do not have a handkerchief, cover your mouth with your upper arm near your inner elbow. Then wash your hands.
- You can use a mask if you wish, taking into account the instructions for its use.

<https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases/information-materials>

<https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates/instructions-for-citizens-on-coronavirus/using-cloth-face-masks-during-the->

coronavirus-pandemic

<https://hyvatyo.ttl.fi/koronavirus/tietoa-itse-tehdyista-kasvomasteista> (in Finnish)

Cleaning

COVID-19 is primarily transmitted as a droplet and contact infection when a person coughs or sneezes. It is possible that the virus might also be transmitted through physical contact. Coronaviruses do not survive for long periods in the air or on surfaces.

Use a slightly alkaline all-purpose cleaner in cleaning. You can use disinfectant to step up cleaning in sanitary facilities. Comply with the cleaning instructions of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.

- Wipe contact surfaces such as door handles, armrests, worktops and tables, light switches and taps at least once a day, preferably twice a day. In places where there are many visitors, cleaning is recommended every 2 to 4 hours.
- Avoid using shared work or study equipment, and they should always be cleaned after each user.

<https://hyvatyo.ttl.fi/koronavirus/ohje-siivoukseen> (in Finnish)

If a coronavirus infection is diagnosed at a public event or public gathering

The physician responsible for communicable diseases in the municipality or hospital district is in charge of investigating transmission chains. If someone at an event is diagnosed with COVID-19, it will be investigated whether others have been exposed to it, and the exposed must be traced and quarantined for 14 days in accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act. In order to facilitate the tracing of infection, the organisers of events and gatherings should, as far as possible and subject to other legislation, have information on the persons involved. By limiting the number of people at public events and public gatherings and restricting people from different groups mingling, the number of people exposed can be reduced if a COVID-19 infection is detected among a group of people.

Considerations related to children and young people taking part in camping activities

- Only those with no symptoms of illness can participate in the camps.
- It is recommended that the camps work in restricted groups of up to 50 persons at most, so that they sleep, eat and work together in such a way that they do not come into contact with others who might be at the camping centre at the same time. This will limit the number of close contacts at the camp and make it easier to trace anyone who might have

become exposed if a COVID-19 infection is diagnosed at the camp.

- General recommendations on good hand hygiene and respiratory and cough hygiene and cleaning practices should be followed.
- Unnecessary physical contact should be avoided (such as handshakes, hugging).
- If a camper is diagnosed with symptoms indicative of COVID-19 at the camp, he or she must be placed in a separate area to wait until it is possible to leave the camp. Then he or she must take a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. If a coronavirus infection is diagnosed, those exposed to it must be traced and quarantined. In such cases, the organiser of the camp must contact the local unit responsible for communicable diseases to get further instructions.