

Coronavirus Disease – COVID-19

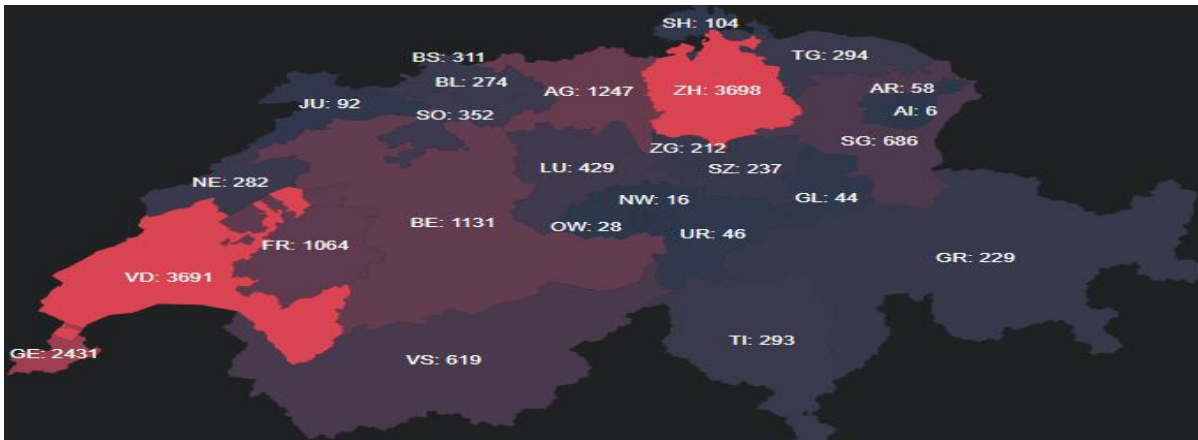
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- The death toll from the coronavirus outbreak is over 951,603 worldwide, with the highest number of deaths in USA (202,304) and Brazil (135,031). There have been more than 230,414,406 global cases in 210 countries and territories. [1]
- The WHO has warned of “alarming rates of transmission” of Covid-19 across Europe and cautioned countries against shortening quarantine periods. Hans Kluge, the WHO’s regional director for Europe, said the number of coronavirus cases in September *“should serve as a wake-up call for all of us”*. *“In the spring and early summer we were able to see the impact of strict lockdown measures. Our efforts, our sacrifices, paid off. In June, cases hit an all-time low. The September case numbers, however, should serve as a wake-up call for all of us. Although these numbers reflect more comprehensive testing, it also shows alarming rates of transmission across the region.”*, he said. The health body also said it would not change its guidance calling for a 14-day quarantine period for anyone exposed to coronavirus. *“Our quarantine recommendation of 14 days has been based on our understanding of the incubation period and transmission of the disease. We would only revise that on the basis of a change of our understanding of the science,”* said Catherine Smallwood, a WHO Europe senior emergency officer. In France for instance, the recommended length for self-isolation in case of exposure has been reduced to seven days. It is 10 days in the UK and Ireland, and several more European countries are currently considering reducing their recommendations. [2]
- Roche is making headway in its search for a corona drug. The already approved Roche drug Actemra / RoActemra (tocilizumab) achieved the desired effect in patients with corona-related pneumonia in the phase III EMPACTA study. Patients who received Actemra / RoActemra plus standard treatment were 44 percent less likely to be put on the ventilator or to die compared to those who received placebo plus standard treatment. The Basel pharmaceutical giant announced this Friday. Roche will also launch an antibody test that can be used to identify people who have been infected with the coronavirus and who have already developed antibodies themselves. The test could play an important role in characterizing a vaccine-induced immune response, Roche said. [3]
- The worrying Covid-19 trends in Europe includes an increase in hospitalizations and people who are needing intensive care treatment, according to Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO’s technical lead for coronavirus. The UK has doubled hospitalizations every eight days or so and there are parts of France that are reaching ICU capacity. Given that the northern hemisphere hasn’t yet really hit autumn or winter or even started to hit the flu season, *“we’re worried that these increasing numbers of hospitalizations and ICU are really going to overburden an already burdened system,”* Van Kerkhove said. *“And again, this is really worrying, because as we hit the flu season, as we start to see other viruses circulating, respiratory viruses circulating, it’s very difficult to distinguish Covid from flu from other respiratory pathogens that are circulating. And if the beds are full with Covid patients, it will be very challenging for the health care system to deal with other respiratory diseases.”*, she added. [4]
- German company BioNTech is drastically increasing its production capacities for a possible Covid-19 vaccine, the company announced Thursday. The company is currently developing a candidate vaccine against coronavirus together with US company Pfizer. [4]

Countries	Deaths	Cases	Recovered
USA	202,304	6,879,675	4,156,240
Brazil	135,031	4,457,443	3,753,082
India	84,505	5,228,478	4,125,742
Mexico	72,179	684,113	488,416
UK	41,705	381,614	N/A
Italy	35,658	293,025	215,954
Peru	31,146	750,098	594,513
France	31,095	415,481	90,840
Spain	30,405	625,651	N/A
Iran	23,952	416,198	355,505
Colombia	23,665	743,945	615,457
Russia	19,195	1,091,186	901,207
South Africa	15,772	655,572	585,303
Argentina	12,491	601,713	467,286
Chile	12,199	442,827	415,981
Ecuador	11,029	122,257	97,063
Belgium	9,936	97,976	18,854
Germany	9,462	270,123	241,300
Indonesia	9,336	236,519	170,774
Canada	9,200	140,867	123,109
Iraq	8,332	307,385	241,100
Bolivia	7,511	129,419	87,716
Turkey	7,315	298,039	263,745
Pakistan	6,408	304,386	291,683
Netherlands	6,273	90,047	N/A
Sweden	5,865	88,237	N/A
Egypt	5,715	101,641	87,158
Bangladesh	4,881	345,805	252,335
Philippines	4,830	279,526	208,790
China	4,634	85,255	80,456
Saudi Arabia	4,430	328,720	308,352
Romania	4,360	110,217	43,244
Ukraine	3,468	169,472	75,486
Guatemala	3,036	83,664	73,260
Poland	2,270	77,328	63,312
Panama	2,213	104,138	77,881
Honduras	2,122	70,120	20,677
Switzerland	2,044	49,283	39,900
Dominican Republic	2,022	106,136	79,363
Portugal	1,894	67,176	45,053
Ireland	1,789	32,023	23,364
Morocco	1,714	94,504	74,930
Kazakhstan	1,671	107,134	101,610
Algeria	1,654	49,194	34,675
Japan	1,473	77,009	69,253
Afghanistan	1,437	38,883	32,576
Israel	1,196	179,071	130,024
Moldova	1,170	44,983	33,239
Nigeria	1,093	56,735	48,092
Kyrgyzstan	1,063	45,244	41,415
Ethiopia	1,060	66,913	27,085
Armenia	926	46,910	42,369
Australia	837	26,861	23,855
Sudan	836	13,535	6,759
Oman	818	91,753	84,648
El Salvador	804	27,346	20,825
Belarus	773	75,230	73,098
Austria	763	36,661	28,451
Bosnia and Herzegovina	752	24,897	17,365
Bulgaria	749	18,544	13,391
Serbia	739	32,757	31,411
North Macedonia	683	16,417	13,732
Hungary	669	16,111	4,240
Costa Rica	666	60,818	22,662
Kenya	646	36,724	23,709
Denmark	635	21,847	17,110
Yemen	585	2,022	1,221

Paraguay	584	31,113	16,313
Kuwait	580	98,528	88,776
Azerbaijan	572	38,894	36,424
Venezuela	520	64,284	52,564
Czechia	489	44,155	23,377
Uzbekistan	419	50,253	46,527
Libya	418	26,438	14,207
Cameroon	415	20,303	18,837
UAE	402	82,568	72,117
Nepal	390	61,593	43,820
S. Korea	377	22,783	19,771
Albania	347	11,948	6,788
Finland	339	8,858	7,700
Zambia	326	13,928	13,029
Greece	325	14,400	3,804
Senegal	301	14,645	11,051
Ghana	294	45,714	44,896
DRC	267	10,442	9,840
Norway	266	12,644	10,371
Lebanon	263	26,768	10,217
Palestine	250	34,401	23,333
Croatia	244	14,513	12,169
Zimbabwe	224	7,633	5,841
Haiti	220	8,556	6,315
Bahrain	218	63,189	56,087
Madagascar	217	15,971	14,587
Qatar	209	122,917	119,822
Malawi	179	5,711	4,000
Syria	165	3,691	903
Mauritania	161	7,346	6,865
Nicaragua	147	4,961	2,913
Angola	144	3,789	1,405
Slovenia	140	4,195	2,939
Tunisia	133	8,570	2,342
Malaysia	129	10,147	9,264
Montenegro	129	7,503	4,892
Mali	128	2,966	2,311
Luxembourg	124	7,541	6,641
Ivory Coast	120	19,158	18,330
Cuba	109	4,933	4,230
Namibia	108	10,078	7,685
Gambia	107	3,473	1,951
Eswatini	103	5,191	4,439
Hong Kong	103	4,997	4,696
Somalia	98	3,390	2,812
Suriname	95	4,671	4,160
Congo	88	4,934	3,887
Lithuania	87	3,565	2,181
Equatorial Guinea	83	5,002	4,509
Liberia	82	1,333	1,214
Chad	81	1,115	962
Tajikistan	73	9,259	8,026
Sierra Leone	72	2,133	1,646
Myanmar	70	4,467	1,130
Bahamas	69	3,177	1,626
Niger	69	1,183	1,104
French Guiana	65	9,623	9,267
Estonia	64	2,814	2,357
Guinea	63	10,183	9,642
CAR	62	4,782	1,830
Uganda	61	5,594	2,544
Djibouti	61	5,399	5,333
Trinidad and Tobago	60	3,434	1,469
Guyana	60	2,027	1,302
Thailand	58	3,497	3,328
Burkina Faso	56	1,767	1,166
Gabon	53	8,678	7,827
Andorra	53	1,483	1,054
Jamaica	51	4,374	1,225
Cabo Verde	49	5,063	4,465
South Sudan	49	2,599	1,290

- More people may have pre-existing immunity to the coronavirus than at first thought, according to an article in the British Medical Journal that challenges the widely held assumption that the immune systems of the world's population were completely naive to infection. In the article, the BMJ cites six studies reporting T-cell reactivity against the virus in 20-50% of people with no known exposure to it. According to the BMJ, researchers behind two separate studies have concluded that these unexpected immune responses could be explained by cross-immunity after exposure to common cold coronaviruses. Taken together, this growing body of research documenting pre-existing immunological responses to SARS-CoV-2 may force pandemic planners to revisit some of their foundational assumptions about how to measure population susceptibility and monitor the extent of epidemic spread. [2]
- While Indonesia has recorded more deaths from the coronavirus than any other Southeast Asian country, it also has seen by far the most fatalities among medical workers in the region, leading to concerns about the long-term impact on the nation's fragile health care system. The tribulations endured by Indonesian health care workers are similar to others globally: long working hours, hospitals filled to capacity and a lack of resources like personal protective equipment. [5]
- Nine cantons in Switzerland (Zurich, Vaud, Geneva, Basel City, Valais, Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Solothurn and Jura) have decided to make face masks mandatory in shops. Canton Vaud has made them mandatory in all public closed. [6]



Newly reported cases since 01.06 in Switzerland. [7]

- **Funding opportunity for researchers**

PRACE (Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe) Fast Track Call for Proposals

- <https://prace-ri.eu/prace-support-to-mitigate-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic/>

The US Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program - a call for proposals on COVID-19

- <https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/ProgramFY.htm?programFYId=256400>

Anyone submitting to US (NIH, DoD) or EU Horizon 2020 calls can contact the Grants Office for support: grantsoffice@research.unibe.ch. The Grants Advisors responsible for the ISPM are Aline Schögler (aline.schoegler@research.unibe.ch) and Leah Witton (leah.witton@research.unibe.ch).

Sources

[1] <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

[2] <https://www.theguardian.com/>

[3] <https://www.blick.ch/news/wirtschaft/ist-das-der-durchbruch-coronamedi-von-roche-scheint-zu-wirken-id16099416.html>

[4] <https://edition.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-09-18-20-intl/index.html>

[5] <https://www.pressreader.com/canada/covid-19-news/details>

[6] https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/covid-19_coronavirus-the-situation-in-switzerland/45592192

[7] <https://www.corona-data.ch/>