



Risk of coronavirus infection in indoor sports and cultural activities

The Government agreed on local and regional recommendations on 23 October 2020 to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic. This recommendation specifies the government resolution.

Baseline of the epidemic

- In regions where the epidemic is at the baseline, the Government recommends that all public events and leisure activities where the number of participants exceeds 50 people be arranged in a way that takes into account the guidelines issued by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Ministry of Education and Culture on hygiene recommendations and safe distances.
- Leisure activities and the use of public spaces must be organised so that participants and parties can avoid close contact with one another in practice.

Acceleration phase of the epidemic

- When using public spaces during the acceleration phase of the epidemic, arrangements must be made to ensure that participants and parties can avoid close contact with one another in practice.
- In the acceleration phase of the epidemic, municipalities may also recommend that the number of users of spaces be limited to half (50%) of the normal permitted number.
- In the acceleration phase and on the basis of restrictions on the use of spaces, municipalities and joint municipal authorities may also recommend suspending indoor group leisure activities for adults (aged 18 and over) and, where possible, carrying out the activities in online form in situations where there is a high risk of infection and the activities are high-risk types of activities.
- Moreover, all group leisure activities must be arranged so that participants and parties can avoid close contact with one another in practice.

Community transmission phase of the epidemic

- In the community transmission phase of the epidemic, it is recommended that group leisure activities for adults take place online whenever possible, and be temporarily suspended altogether, if necessary, by means of restrictions on the use of spaces. If necessary, public spaces may be closed altogether, taking into account the nature of their use.
- However, careful discretion should be used when considering whether to suspend children's and young people's leisure activities. Children are less likely than adults to spread coronavirus infections, and the disadvantages associated with a temporary suspension of children's group leisure activities may be greater than in the case of adults.

High-risk situations and types of activities

- Factors that have a bearing on the risk of infection in leisure activities include the number of participants, the size of the space being used for the activities and air conditioning in the space, and the quality of the activities.
- In essence, the risk of infection increases if it is not possible to ensure adequate safe distancing (at least 2 metres between each person on a continuous basis), masks cannot be used and the leisure activity involves shortness of breath or strenuous use of voice.
- The risk of coronavirus is higher especially in indoor team activities and contact activities where it is difficult to avoid contact. According to studies, singing in a choir has also been associated with an increased risk of infection.
- It has been shown that coronavirus infections have occurred in sports activities, at least in activities where physical contact cannot be avoided, as well as in dance lessons and choir practice.*
- Municipalities make the decisions on possible restrictions on the use of spaces used for leisure activities. Actors in the sector, such sports federations, the Olympic Committee, and cultural and youth organisations, are encouraged to draw up more detailed guidelines to support municipal decision-making and to improve safety in leisure activities.
- The bodies in municipalities and hospital districts responsible for communicable diseases should assess the risks associated with group leisure activities in their area and the plans for managing them.

Research papers *

Atrubin D, Wiese M, Bohinc B. An Outbreak of COVID-19 Associated with a Recreational Hockey Game — Florida, June 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1492–1493. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6941a4>

Cluster of Coronavirus Disease Associated with Fitness Dance Classes, South Korea. Jang S, Han SH, Rhee JY. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2020 Aug;26(8):1917-1920. doi: 10.3201/eid2608.200633. Epub 2020 May 15. PMID: 32412896 Free PMC article.

Hamner L, Dubbel P, Capron I, et al. High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice — Skagit County, Washington, March 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:606–610. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6919e6>