

Netherlands see increase in coronavirus infections

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People enjoy the sun in Vondelpark after a sudden change in weather brought spring temperatures around 16 degrees Celsius, or 61 Fahrenheit, to Amsterdam, Netherlands, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021. (AP Photo/Peter Dejong)

Confirmed coronavirus infections in the Netherlands rose by nearly 19%

over the past week as more people got tested following a week of icy conditions, the country's public health institute announced Tuesday.

The percentage of positive tests in what the institute called a "third wave" of infections declined slightly from 11.5% to 9.8%.

The public health institute said in a statement that the combination of lockdown measures including a curfew and limiting people to one visitor per day in their homes since Jan. 23 is estimated to have reduced infections by 10%.

"Because the majority of the population has not yet been vaccinated, it is very important to prevent infections as much as possible and to keep this third wave as low as possible," the institute said. "This is only possible if a relaxation (of the lockdown) is done with great caution and step-by-step."

The announcement came ahead of a press conference at which Prime Minister Mark Rutte is expected to announce an extension of the country's [coronavirus](#) curfew and keeping non-essential shops, bars, restaurants and other venues like cinemas shuttered.

Rutte is also expected to introduce some incremental easing or restrictions, such as allowing [high school students](#) to return to classrooms for a few hours each week and to re-open some businesses like hair salons.

An umbrella organization for the catering industry has said it plans to file [legal action](#) against the government to force the reopening of bars and restaurants and to seek compensation for lost revenue on top of the state aid they already are receiving.

More than 15,300 people are confirmed to have died of COVID-19 in

the Netherlands.

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