

# Coronavirus: Germany says its outbreak is 'under control'



Germany has brought the infection rate down considerably -Reuters

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Germany's health minister says the month-long lockdown has brought his country's coronavirus outbreak under control.

Jens Spahn said that since 12 April the number of recovered patients had been consistently higher than the number of new infections.

The infection rate has dropped to 0.7 - that is, each infected person passed the virus to fewer than one other.

In Germany 3,868 have died of COVID-19 - fewer than in Italy, Spain or France.

However, the number of fatalities is still rising in Germany, as is the number of infected health care workers.

So far almost 134,000 people have been infected in Germany.

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The degree of lockdown varies across Germany's regions - it is tightest in the states of Bavaria and Saarland.

On Wednesday Chancellor Angela Merkel announced tentative steps to start easing the restrictions. Some smaller shops will reopen next week and schools will start reopening in early May, with the focus on students due to sit exams soon.

But Mrs. Merkel warned there was "little margin for error" and that "caution should be the watchword". Sports and leisure facilities, as well as cafes and restaurants, will remain closed indefinitely.

Germany's network of diagnostic labs has been praised internationally for having responded rapidly to the pandemic. By early April Germany was doing more than 100,000 swab tests daily, enabling more coronavirus carriers to be traced than in other EU countries.

Mr. Spahn said that by August, German companies would produce up to 50 million face masks a week for healthcare workers.

On Friday the eastern state of Saxony became the first German state to make the wearing of masks compulsory on public transport and in shops. Mask-wearing is compulsory in neighboring Austria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

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- China denied a cover-up over its coronavirus death figures after it revised up the number who died in the city of Wuhan, where the virus first emerged, by 50% to 3,869
  - The total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Spain rose to 188,068, as the daily death toll increased from 551 to 585. The Spanish authorities have vowed to include people who have died outside hospitals in their figures
  - French President Emmanuel Macron joined those questioning China's handling of the coronavirus outbreak, saying things "happened that we don't know about" in China.
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Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52327956>

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