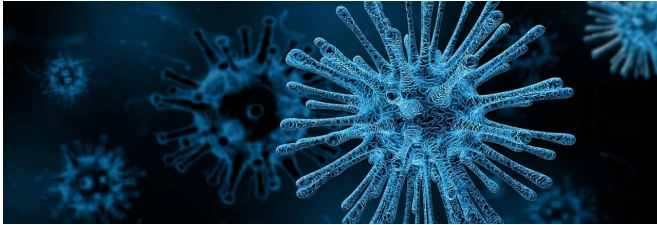


Ireland's third virus lockdown set to last to April

11 February 2021



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Ireland's virus lockdown is set to be extended until April, Prime Minister Micheal Martin said Thursday, as the country battles to get infection rates and deaths down.

"Certainly we are looking at a continuation of high levels of restrictions until the Easter period," Martin told state broadcaster RTE.

Restaurants and pubs across Ireland have been shut since Christmas Eve and the non-essential retail sector has been closed since New Year's Eve.

Children did not return to school in January after the festive break, and residents have been told to stay at home as Dublin dramatically stepped up domestic and international travel curbs.

Martin told RTE the exact plan for prolonging lockdown "remains to be determined by government" but reopening schools and [construction projects](#) is "a priority".

According to latest official figures, 3,794 people have died from COVID-19 in Ireland.

Ireland navigated two previous waves of coronavirus with relatively low case and [death](#) figures.

But after Martin relaxed restrictions in December to give the nation a "meaningful Christmas", cases rose dramatically in a surge now blamed on festive mingling and the arrival of new virus variants.

For a time in early January, Ireland had the highest per capita rate of infection in the world, according to Oxford University data.

More than 40 percent of the total [virus](#) deaths have occurred in the first six weeks of 2021.

And last week the nation registered a record 101 coronavirus deaths in its daily toll.

"We have to get those numbers down, we have to relieve those pressures," Martin said.

"Not just in the short term but for a sustained period."

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