

# U.S. Is Now the Coronavirus Epicenter

As of Thursday, the United States has the most recorded cases of COVID-19. The number of total coronavirus cases in the U.S. rose to 85,749, surpassing China's total of 81,430. It is likely that the number of cases is much higher than reported, as the U.S. healthcare system has been unable to provide easy and effective testing to most of the population.

Image credits Richard Codor (above) World Meters (below/right)

WORLD / COUNTRIES / UNITED STATES

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 United States

Coronavirus Cases:

**86,454**

Deaths:

**1,315**

Recovered:

**1,868**

The testing timeline in the U.S. has been rocky. The first case of coronavirus in the U.S. was registered on January 20, but fewer than 4,000 tests had been administered in the U.S. by February 27. The number of tests given by March 12 was less than 4,000. The United States has been unable to provide large-scale testing for the virus until recently. In a March 12 hearing in the House of Representatives, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and a key figure in the United States' response to the COVID-19 pandemic addressed the issue.

*The system is not really geared to what we need right now, what you are asking for. That is a failing. Let's admit it. The fact is, the way the system was set up is that the public health component...was a system where you put it out there in the public and a physician asks for it and you get it. The idea of anybody getting it easily, the way people in other countries are doing it, we're not set up for that.*

**NBC**

Early testing is crucial in limiting the spread of COVID-19. South Korea saw its first case of the virus on the same day that the United States did, January 20th, and the government was quick to implement a testing program. By March 5, South Korea had administered more than 140,000 tests.

Eric Feigl-Ding is a senior fellow and epidemiologist at the Federation of American Scientists in Washington, D.C. He notes that South Korea is now testing 15,000 people a day, with a maximum capacity of 22,000.

*In terms of per capita testing, Korea has run 3,600 tests per 1 million population. In contrast, U.S. has just run five tests per 1 million people.*

**NPR**

That approach to this pandemic is paying off. On March 26, South Korea recorded a less than 1% (.98%) increase in cases of COVID-19. In contrast, cases in the U.S. increased by 26.5%. Those numbers are only going to increase as the United States struggles to combat a healthcare crisis with a system unprepared to handle it.

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## **Why does Coronavirus Spreading So Easily?**

*Outside a host, viruses are dormant. They have none of the traditional trappings of life: metabolism, motion, the ability to reproduce. AD*

*And they can last this way for quite a long time. Recent laboratory research showed that, although SARS-CoV-2 typically degrades in minutes or a few hours outside a host, some particles can remain viable – potentially infectious – on cardboard for up to 24 hours and on plastic and stainless steel for up to three days. In 2014, a virus frozen in permafrost for 30,000 years that scientists retrieved was able to infect an amoeba after being revived in the lab.*

*Washington Post*

*This could have been stopped by implementing testing and surveillance much earlier – for example, when the first imported cases were identified.*

*Angela Rasmussen, a virologist at Columbia University in New York.*

*Now at least 160 million Americans have been ordered to stay home in states from California to New York. Schools are closed, often along with bars, restaurants and many other businesses. Hospitals are coping with soaring numbers of patients in New York City, even as supplies of essential protective gear and equipment dwindle.*

*NY Times*

**Sources:**

- <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/26/usa-now-has-more-coronavirus-cases-than-either-china-or-italy.html>
- <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/03/26/821688981/how-south-korea-reigned-in-the-outbreak-without-shutting-everything-down>