

UK supermarkets impose limits to stop virus stockpiling

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British supermarkets have started imposing limits on the purchase of certain goods after shelves were emptied because of coronavirus fears.

Toilet paper, anti-bacterial hand gel, tinned food, soap and paracetamol have been in short supply both in stores and online because of panic buying.

The situation has been fuelled by recommendations last week by [health authorities](#) for Britons to "plan ahead" in case they are forced to self-isolate for several weeks.

But the country's chief scientific adviser Patrick Vallance said he believed there was "absolutely no reason" for the public to panic buy.

Tesco last weekend introduced measures to limit purchases to a maximum five items for products including pasta, anti-bacterial hand-wipes and gels, and long-life milk.

The supermarket giant, which has nearly 3,500 stores in Britain, is so far the only supermarket chain to have imposed restrictions on [food items](#).

Others such as Waitrose have limited the online sale of some wipes and soaps, while Walmart subsidiary Asda is only allowing the purchase of two anti-bacterial gels in stores and online.

Last week, pharmacy chain Boots limited the sale of disinfecting hand gel, after sales skyrocketed because of the spread of the virus.

Sales have more than tripled in recent weeks in Britain, which as of Sunday had 278 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including three deaths.

Liquid soap sales increased by seven percent and household cleaning products by 10 percent in the four weeks to February 23 compared with the same period a year earlier, retail research company Kantar said.

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