

# Virus deaths up slightly in Spain for second day

April 22 2020

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Spain said Wednesday another 435 people died in the past 24 hours, a slight increase in the figures for a second day running and bringing the overall death toll to 21,717.

Spain has suffered the third-highest number of deaths in the world after the United States and Italy, with infections now hitting 208,000 cases, health ministry figures showed.

Monday's figure of 399 deaths was the lowest in four weeks, but a day later, it rose to 430 with officials explaining the numbers tend to go up slightly on Tuesdays following delays in receiving regional data on weekend deaths.

The March 14 lockdown has been twice extended with parliament on Wednesday expected to prolong it until May 9.

But from Sunday, the conditions are to be eased for youngsters in Spain, who have not been allowed out of the house for nearly six weeks under one of the most restrictive lockdowns in the world.

From April 26, those under 14 will be allowed to go for a walk with one of their parents or accompany them on trips out to buy food, medicine or go to the bank.

Addressing MPs at Wednesday's parliamentary session, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said moves to ease the lockdown would likely begin in the second half of May, warning they would be "slow and gradual" and carried out with extreme caution.

"The second half of May offers the prospect of a scaling-back (of the lockdown), of phase two of the fight" when the restrictions "will be modified", he said.

But the lockdown "will not be lifted until we are prepared for it because we are not going to take any risks," he said, insisting that "any optimism must be tempered by prudence".

"We must be incredibly careful in this phase," he said.

"The scaling-back period will be slow and gradual, precisely because it has to be safe."

Spanish health officials believe the epidemic peaked on April 2 when 950 people died over 24 hours, nearly three weeks after the government imposed a nationwide [lockdown](#), effectively confining almost 47 million citizens to their homes to slow the spread of the virus.

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