

Turkey announces plan to ease virus restrictions

May 4 2020



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stands during an event to mark Turkey's National Sovereignty and Children's Day, in Istanbul, Thursday, April 23, 2020. Turkey celebrates National Sovereignty and Children's Day on the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Turkey's parliament and Turks are marking their first national holiday under lockdown amid the new coronavirus pandemic. (Turkish Presidency via AP, Pool)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced Monday what he called a "normalization plan" to gradually ease restrictions imposed during the coronavirus pandemic as the death rate falls, but warned of tougher measures to come should the number of infections rebound.

In a televised address following a Cabinet meeting, Erdogan said shopping malls would be allowed to open starting on May 11, as would barber shops, hairdressers and beauty parlors—as long as they work on a system of appointment and accept customers at half-capacity.

Erdogan said that the government is also lifting entry and exit restrictions for seven cities where the [coronavirus outbreak](#) has been brought under control. The measure, however, will remain in place for 24 other cities, including Istanbul and Ankara.

He also announced a respite for those chafing in home quarantine.

Erdogan said that those over 65—who have been under a curfew for the past six weeks—will be allowed to leave homes for four hours on May 10 when the rest of the population will be observing a weekend stay-at-home order. Children would be allowed to take walks for four hours on May 13 and teenagers on May 15.

"We have reached an important cornerstone," Erdogan said, as he announced the gradual lifting of restrictions.

But he also warned: "If the rules aren't adhered to and the outbreak spreads again we will be forced to resort to tougher measures."

Meanwhile the [health minister](#) announced 64 new deaths from COVID-19 in the past 24 hours—slightly up from Sunday's 61 deaths, which was the lowest number of daily fatalities in over a month. The country's [death toll](#) now stands at 3,461.

Fahrettin Koca, the minister, also reported 1,614 more confirmed cases, bringing the total number of infections to 127,659.

Turkey ranks eighth in confirmed cases, according to Johns Hopkins University.

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