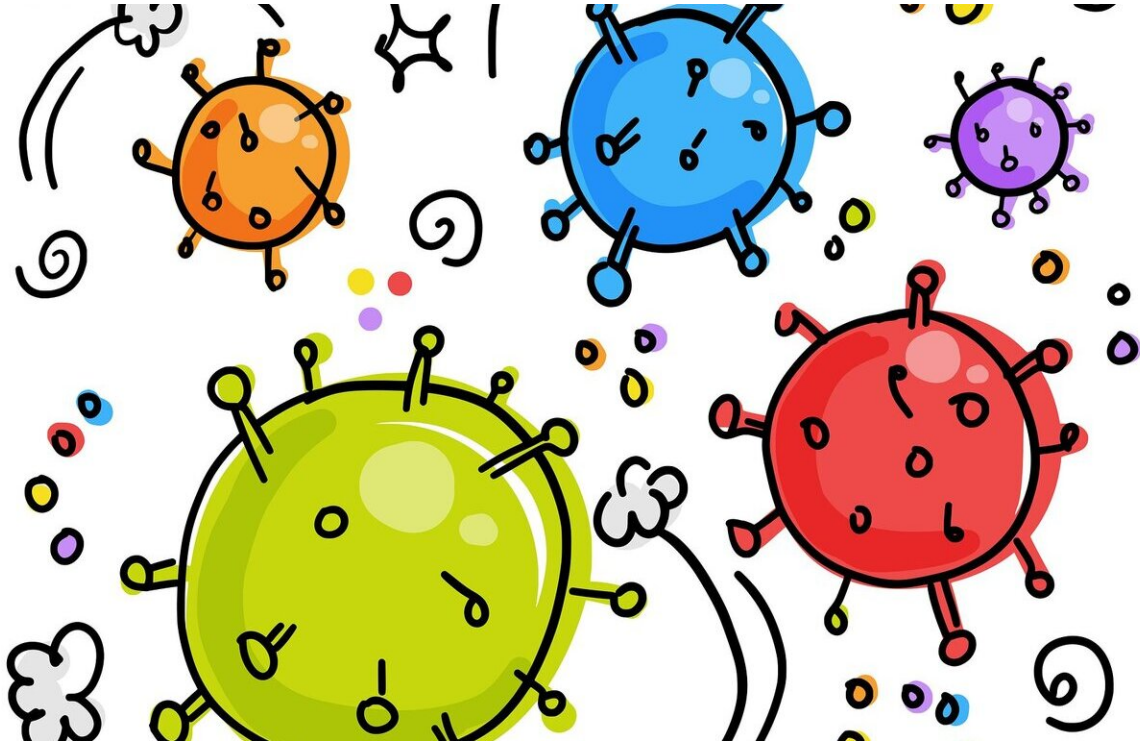


Ireland limits crowds as virus cases rise

August 18 2020



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The government on Tuesday introduced harsher new limits on public gatherings in Ireland and asked people to avoid using public transport as coronavirus cases continue to rise.

All outdoor events will be limited to 15 people, down from 200, until at least September 13 with indoor events limited to six people, down from

50.

Religious services, including weddings, will be exempted from the new rules and shops, hotels and restaurants will stay open, but sporting fixtures will now have to take place without a crowd.

Over 70s will be asked to exercise "individual judgement" and limit their interactions to a small group of people.

"This virus is as deadly as it was before," prime minister Micheal Martin said Tuesday as he announced the new measures.

"COVID 19 will not simply disappear... we're not at a stage we can return to normality," he added. "We are at another critical moment."

The police have been handed new powers to enforce the rules.

Although Ireland's overall death toll of 1,774 is low by international standards, its growth rate of cases is now the fourth highest in Europe.

Martin warned of "multiple significant outbreaks associated with workplaces, households and social activities".

"The evidence is that a large number of people are acting as if the virus is no threat to them, or that it's OK to take a few more risks," he added.

"We must remember our responsibilities to each other."

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