



National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

RIVM

*researches,
identifies and
advises*



The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) researches, identifies and advises and performs tasks related to public health and the living environment in the Netherlands. As an agency of the Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), RIVM works on projects commissioned by various clients. The RIVM Act states that RIVM determines how the work is done and that the performance of the work is independent and scientifically sound. Where useful and necessary, RIVM works with national and international organisations. In doing so, we work to build a body of scientific knowledge to support policy and address the challenges that our society faces, now and in the future.

Driven by commissioned projects, based on science

RIVM operates on the basis of commissioned projects. We work closely with our commissioning clients to determine what topics should be researched. Once a project has been commissioned, RIVM starts working on implementation. This takes place based on independent scientific research. We publish our results and studies and provide access to everyone wherever possible. This makes RIVM a trusted advisor to the government, professionals and members of the public. In doing so, we support society in staying healthy and keeping our environment healthy.

Trusted advisor to the government, professionals and members of the public

The majority of RIVM's income is derived from projects commissioned by various government ministries in the Netherlands, such as the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. RIVM also works for regional, national and international clients, such as the European Commission and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Future challenges that society faces

Supplementing the commissioned projects that RIVM carries out, we also have a small research programme of our own: Strategic Programme RIVM. Through this programme, we finance our own research, innovation and knowledge development. This enables us to prepare properly to address future challenges in society related to public health, nature and the environment in the Netherlands.

Living in a safe, clean, healthy environment

Many people live in the Netherlands and there is a lot of pressure on our living environment. For that reason, government authorities have to make smart use of possibilities to keep our living environment clean, healthy and safe. RIVM has extensive knowledge in this field and is a trusted advisor. For instance, we monitor the quality of air, water and soil. We also perform on-site measurements after an accident or disaster in which hazardous substances may have been released. In addition, we research various forms of radiation, for example emissions from radioactive chemicals, light sources, high-voltage power lines and mobile phones. RIVM is always working to address new environmental issues and answer other questions in our society regarding the living environment, sustainability, safety and health.



Preventing and controlling infectious diseases

In the Netherlands, many organisations work together to prevent and control infectious diseases. The Centre for Infectious Disease Control (CIb) at RIVM takes the lead in these efforts. For example, we organise the National Immunisation Programme to protect children against infectious diseases such as measles or whooping cough.



In the event of local and regional outbreaks, we help the Municipal Public Health Services (GGDs) to control the infectious disease. If major outbreaks occur, RIVM coordinates disease control efforts. Examples include the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, Q fever, foodborne infections or dangerous infectious diseases such as Ebola and Lassa fever. RIVM compiles knowledge by conducting research in laboratories and in the field and studying the incidence and spread of diseases. RIVM constantly collects, analyses and interprets data on infectious diseases. To that end, we work with organisations in the Netherlands and abroad. RIVM forms a bridge between science, policy and practice.

Good healthcare and a healthy lifestyle

RIVM investigates what is needed for good healthcare and a healthy lifestyle. That includes the safety of medical products, medicines and foods. We also look at the lifestyles of people living in the Netherlands. For example, RIVM researches the health risks of smoking, alcohol and obesity and how much salt Dutch people consume.

We also assess the impact of national and local health programmes, so healthcare professionals and municipalities will know which are most effective. RIVM also contributes to neonatal health by screening babies for diseases during pregnancy and right after birth. We also have population screening programmes for prevention or early detection of diseases, such as colon cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer.



Five core tasks under the same roof

1. Conducting scientific research and compiling, sharing and explaining knowledge.
2. Providing advice to the national government, to other government authorities, to professionals and to members of the public.
3. Implementing prevention programmes, including vaccination programmes.
4. Monitoring public health, diseases, and quality in nature and the human environment.
5. Helping to prevent, respond to and control disasters and crisis situations.

Combining these core tasks under the same roof is efficient and effective. As a result, RIVM can quickly coordinate its research, surveillance and advisory tasks and identify demand for new research.

RIVM works towards a healthy population living in a sustainable, safe and healthy environment

Organisation

RIVM has three knowledge centres: Environment and Safety, Infectious Diseases and Vaccinology, and Public Health and Health Services. The RIVM organisation also includes the Department for Vaccine Supply and Prevention Programmes and the support staff departments that handle operational management. The Executive Board consists of the Director-General and a management board. This is the highest decision-making body at RIVM level. A Scientific Advisory Board monitors the scientific quality of the work being done at RIVM and the institute's independence. Accredited scientists are on the committee. RIVM currently has about 1800 employees.

At the heart of society

Our projects are always relevant to society and demand that we stand at the heart of society. To that end, RIVM communicates with all stakeholders. RIVM provides spokespersons and press information regarding our own work and makes agreements with our commissioning clients about public communication on the themes that we contribute to through our research and knowledge.

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Committed to *health and sustainability*