



The coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 COVID-19: from infection to symptoms

Corona means crown

The coronavirus – SARS-CoV-2 – gets its name from its shape. Under a microscope, the virus looks like a crown. The Latin word for crown is ‘corona’.



The virus needs us

A virus is a very small particle of genetic material. A virus needs living cells to survive. For example human cells.



Spreading through droplets and contact

When you cough, sneeze, talk, shout or scream, small droplets come out of your mouth or nose. Someone who breathes them in can get infected. If you touch your nose or mouth, the virus can end up on your hands. Someone who shakes your hand and then touches their own face could also get infected in this way.



Groups of people

The virus can spread easily if there are many people close together in one room. Many people produce many droplets. Those droplets only have to travel a small distance. This could cause many people to be infected.



Replicating quickly

If you are infected, the virus invades your healthy cells. The cells in your lungs, throat or nose very quickly start making lots of new virus particles. The virus takes over and you become ill.



The virus makes you ill



Mild symptoms

The virus can cause: a runny nose, sneezing, coughing, sore throat and higher temperature. Sometimes you can no longer taste and/or smell anything.

Serious symptoms

Sometimes you become very ill and get a high fever or shortness of breath in addition to mild symptoms. The virus can

make you so ill that you have to go to the hospital. Some people die from it.

Vulnerable groups

The virus can spread more easily among people who are vulnerable. That could include older people and people who have another health condition, like asthma, diabetes, or chronic heart or lung disease. They are also more likely to become seriously ill.

