



Coronavirus Covid - 19

Important Disclaimer:

Due to the fact that coronavirus COVID-19 is a new virus discovered as recently as December 2019, new discoveries regarding its symptoms, effects, potential treatments and preventative measures are being made all the time.

At present, much of the information provided by major bodies like the World Health Organisation and the CDC is speculative at best. All information presented in this free COVID-19 course is correct as of April 1st 2020, but may not reflect the latest developments and updated information on a real-time basis.

Though we are committed to continually updating this course with new and important information, we cannot guarantee its absolute accuracy on a 24/7 basis.

All information in this course is based on official guidelines and reports from the WHO, the CDC, the NHS and other leading bodies.

Please contact Oxford Home Study Centre if you have any questions, or to discuss our free coronavirus course in more detail.

Coronavirus Covid-19 - Free Course Content

The outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus in early 2020 caught the entire world off guard. Alarming healthcare and scientific communities worldwide with its terrifying transmission speed, COVID-19 (formally known as SARS-CoV-2) would quickly trigger the biggest global health emergency in over a century.

It took just weeks for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to spread from its origins at a Wuhan food market to countries as far away as the United Kingdom, the Middle East and the United States.

As of the 1st of April 2020, official estimates from the World Health Organization suggest that just under 800,000 people have so far been infected with COVID-19, of which more than 38,000 have died.

The figures make for grim reading, though health experts worldwide continue to advise the general public that the actual likelihood of any given person becoming ill is in fact quite low. Just as long as you follow the instructions of government and public health advisers in your country or jurisdiction, you've every chance of avoiding infection.

Knowledge is power when facing unprecedented global emergencies like these. In this free coronavirus course, we'll be taking a look at some of the most important specifics of COVID-19 in more detail.

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What Are Coronaviruses?

Contrary to popular belief, coronaviruses are actually quite common. The term 'coronavirus' itself refers to an extensive classification of viruses, which cause infections of the sinuses, nose and upper throat.

The name 'coronavirus' derives from the fact that the virus has a similar appearance to a crown, when observed under a microscope.

While the vast majority of coronaviruses pose little threat to human life, the newly identified COVID-19 can be deadly. Officially discovered in December 2019 in the midst of an outbreak in China, SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2) was subsequently recognised as a new type of coronavirus by the World Health Organization.

SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19.

What Is COVID-19?

Like all coronaviruses, COVID-19 is characterised as an infection of the respiratory tract. This means COVID-19 can cause mild to severe symptoms affecting the throat, nose and sinuses (the upper respiratory tract) or the windpipe and lungs (the lower respiratory tract).

One of the most shocking characteristics of the new COVID-19 virus is the way in which it spreads with exceptional ferocity from person-to-person. While some of those affected experience extremely mild symptoms (or no symptoms whatsoever), others require immediate and extensive medical care.

This is where COVID-19 differs significantly from the vast majority of coronaviruses like the common cold, which despite being widespread throughout the year pose no major threat to healthy individuals.

What Are the Symptoms of COVID-19?

Understanding the symptoms of COVID-19 is proving problematic, both for the global scientific community and for the public at large. This is because not only are some of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 similar to those of the common cold or flu, but many patients diagnosed with COVID-19 do not experience any initial symptoms whatsoever.

According to the World Health Organization, it is possible to carry COVID-19 for anything from 48 hours to 14 days, prior to any symptoms becoming noticeable.

New discoveries about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are being made on a daily basis, which is why it is essential to keep up with the latest information from the WHO, CDC, NHS and so on. The most common indicative symptoms of COVID-19 are as follows:

- A high temperature
- A new continuous cough
- Shortness of breath

Some patients (though in significantly smaller numbers) have also reported the following symptoms, following their COVID-19 diagnosis:

- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Loss of taste or smell











- Aches and pains
- Diarrhoea
- Chronic fatigue

However, no specific combination of any of the above symptoms *confirms* a case of COVID-19. The only way to accurately diagnose COVID-19 is by way of a special test, which is currently only offered to those presenting with more severe symptoms and frontline medical workers.

Is it a Cold, the Flu or COVID-19?

Distinguishing between the flu, the common cold and COVID-19 can be difficult with milder cases of the virus. This is because the early symptoms of all three illnesses may be relatively similar, while patients often present with entirely different *combinations* of symptoms.

To simplify the identification of COVID-19, several major public health authorities and media outlets have produced visual guides to the symptoms of coronaviruses:

SYMPTOMS	CORONAVIRUS	COLD	FLU
 FEVER	COMMON	RARE	COMMON
 FATIGUE	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES	COMMON
 COUGH	COMMON (USUALLY DRY)	MILD	COMMON (USUALLY DRY)
 SNEEZING	NO	COMMON	NO
 ACHES AND PAINS	SOMETIMES	COMMON	COMMON
 RUNNY OR STUFFY NOSE	RARE	COMMON	SOMETIMES
 SORE THROAT	SOMETIMES	COMMON	SOMETIMES
 DIARRHOEA	RARE	NO	SOMETIMES (FOR CHILDREN)
 HEADACHES	SOMETIMES	RARE	COMMON
 SHORTNESS OF BREATH	SOMETIMES	NO	NO

Source: The Mirror UK

As there is a degree of crossover between the three illnesses, it is important to take sensible precautions if you suspect you may have COVID-19. Speak to your doctor or healthcare provider if necessary, though it is worth remembering that most mild cases of COVID-19 can be managed at home, without professional medical care.

Mild vs Severe Infection

The National Health Service (NHS) in the UK estimates that around 80% of those infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms, similar to those of a regular cold. In which case, no special treatment or medical care is required.

However, approximately one in every six of those infected with COVID-19 will become seriously ill and require extensive treatment. The highest risk brackets for serious illness or death due to COVID-19 are as follows:

- Individuals aged 70 or over
- People with compromised immune systems
- Patients with underlying medical problems

Underlying medical issues that elevate the risk of developing serious illness from COVID-19 include chronic respiratory conditions, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and certain types of cancer.

Irrespective of your age and general state of health, authorities advise seeking immediate medical advice upon experiencing any of the following more severe symptoms:

- Trouble breathing
- Blue lips or face
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Confusion
- Excessive drowsiness

Call the emergency services immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.

However, patients experiencing milder COVID-19 symptoms are advised *not* to call the emergency services or travel to their local surgery. Instead, public health bodies advise calling your doctor's office (or any special numbers/helplines) set up in your jurisdiction for further advice.

Travelling to a medical centre while experiencing the initial symptoms of COVID-19 risks spreading the virus to other people.

How is the Coronavirus Transmitted?

The primary method of transmission for the newly identified COVID-19 is close person-to-person contact.

According to the World Health Organization, the virus that causes COVID-19 is transmitted through the droplets produced when an individual carrying the infection speaks, sneezes or coughs. Each of these actions causes tiny droplets to project into the surrounding space, often travelling up to 6 feet through the air.

Should any of these droplets be inhaled or swallowed, the respective individual may develop the virus. Coronaviruses can also be transmitted by way of these microscopic droplets entering the body through the eyes.

Contrary to popular belief, COVID-19 is not currently recognized as an airborne virus. Instead, the droplets emitted that spread the virus from person to person are too heavy to remain suspended in the air. Once produced, they quickly give way to gravity and settle on floors and surrounding surfaces.

This is precisely why public health authorities are currently advising people to keep a distance of at least two metres between themselves and others. In doing so, this significantly reduces their likelihood of being exposed to the droplets carrying the virus.

Is Surface Transmission Possible with COVID-19?

Both the National Health Service in the United Kingdom and the World Health Organization have stated that the likelihood of catching COVID-19 from a contaminated surface is comparatively low. There is currently little to no evidence to support the theory that the surface transmission poses anywhere near as severe a threat as close person-to-person contact.

However, most health authorities also acknowledge the fact that COVID-19 can survive on a variety of surfaces for several hours. As a result, it is technically possible to catch coronavirus by touching a surface or object that is contaminated, before touching your nose, your mouth or your eyes.

According to the latest COVID-19 research, the virus can survive the following periods of time on common everyday surfaces:

- Copper: 4 hours
- Cardboard: up to 24 hours
- Plastic or stainless steel: 2 to 3 days

Public health groups are therefore advising a common-sense approach, which through simple everyday hygiene can eliminate the risk of surface transmission from the equation. Even if the risk of contracting COVID-19 from a contaminated surface is relatively low, it still represents a risk that is best avoided where possible.

What Does ‘Community Spread’ Mean?

The term ‘community spread’ is used by health officials and doctors when the actual source of an infection is unclear. In the case of COVID-19, community spread occurs when an individual contracts the virus despite not having had (or nor realise having had) close contact with an infected individual, and who hasn’t been out of the country to an affected area.

For example, the CDC in the United States confirmed in February that an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 previously had no known contact with an infected individual and had not travelled to an affected area. This was documented as the first official case of community spread in North America. However, the extent of the pandemic worldwide makes it impossible to confirm whether any given person has been exposed to an infected individual or not. Particularly as COVID-19 is often asymptomatic - those carrying and transmitting it may not even realise they have it.

How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19

The most important good-practice guidelines from protecting yourself from COVID-19 are relatively straightforward. For the most part, it’s simply a case of making a few basic lifestyle changes and getting yourself (and your family) into good habits.

Formal recommendations from leading global health authorities are as follows:

- Keep your hands clean
 - **Wash your hands properly** with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds on a regular basis, especially if you have been out in public or have recently coughed or sneezed.
 - **Use an approved hand sanitizer** with an alcohol content of at least 60% throughout the day, whenever soap and water are not available.
 - Unless you have recently washed your hands, it is advisable to **avoid touching your mouth, your nose and your eyes** under any circumstances.
- Avoid close contact with others
 - Under no circumstances should you **visit or meet anyone** who displays even the mildest suspected symptoms of COVID-19.
 - If you live in an affected area, **practice social distancing** as instructed by your local health authority.
 - **Do not allow visitors** into your home under any circumstances and avoid opening your door to couriers, delivery drivers and so on where possible.
- Lead a healthy lifestyle
 - **Protect and strengthen your immune system**, which is your number-one defence against the most dangerous symptoms and effects of COVID-19.
 - Make sure you **eat a balanced diet and exercise** on a regular basis, which may mean getting creative at home if you're self-isolating or on lockdown.
 - Avoid alcohol, tobacco and all other **negative lifestyle habits** that could take a toll on your immune system.

How to Protect Others from COVID-19

The key to overcoming the global COVID-19 crisis lies in behaving responsibly, and proactively protecting those around you. Several important guidelines have been issued by the World Health Organization and other leading authorities, which primarily concern the following:

- Stay at home
 - Follow all **self-isolation and lockdown rules** in your area to the letter, as they are issued for a good reason.
 - Even if you are experiencing no symptoms whatsoever, you could still be carrying and **spreading COVID-19 without realizing it**.
 - Contact your doctor or healthcare service by telephone if you experience mild symptoms, rather than visiting a health centre or surgery in person.
- Cover your nose and mouth
 - Always use a tissue where possible to **cover your nose and mouth** when coughing or sneezing, or the inside of your elbow if you do not have one.
 - Immediately **throw every used tissue in the trash** after one use, as opposed to using the same tissue or handkerchief several times over.
 - Give your hands a thorough **wash for at least 20 seconds** after coughing or sneezing, or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available at the time.

Do I Need to Wear a Facemask?

Official advice on the effectiveness of facemasks for the general public varies from one source to the next. However, both the World Health Organization and the CDC in the United States currently state that facemasks are NOT necessary for everyday use by the general public:

- **If experience COVID-19 symptoms:**
 - If you have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, it is advisable to wear a facemask to protect those around you. This is because the mask you wear will limit your production and spread of droplets when sneezing, coughing or talking, subsequently limiting the spread of the virus.

- **If you are healthy:**
 - The general recommendation to healthy individuals is to NOT wear a facemask, unless directly instructed by a doctor or a qualified professional. Facemasks are already in dangerously short supply in some of the worst affected areas worldwide, therefore should be saved for those who need them.

Wearing a mask is considered compulsory for anyone caring for an individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. However, it is important to remember that not all masks provide the same level of protection against COVID-19 - choose a mask approved by health authorities (local, national or international) where possible.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Against Coronavirus

While there is currently no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can be caught from a contaminated surface, common sense precautions are advised to eliminate the possibility entirely.

The latest advice from the World Health Organization highlights the following as important for all households and businesses alike:

- Ensure all **frequently touched surfaces** are cleaned on a regular basis, which includes doorknobs and handles, phones, desks, toilets, computer keyboards, tables, work surfaces, light switches, sinks and so on.
- Disinfect and **sanitise dirty surfaces after cleaning** them in the normal way, using an environmentally friendly disinfectant or sanitizer that is approved for use on the surface/material in question.

It's also possible to make an effective cleaning solution by diluting approximately four teaspoons of household bleach in 1 litre of water. Under no circumstances should household bleach be mixed with any other cleaning products, as doing so can increase the risk of harmful emissions being produced. Alcohol solutions can be particularly effective in cleaning and disinfecting against COVID-19, though must have a minimum alcohol content of 70% to eliminate the virus.

What Should I Do if I Get Sick?

If you suspect you may have contracted COVID-19, it's important to remember that the vast majority of cases are mild and require no medical intervention. In which case, you will be able to manage your symptoms and take care of yourself at home, until you are well enough to end self-isolation.

However, if you experience any emergency warning signs whatsoever - examples of which include

breathing difficulties, disorientation or chest pains - you must ensure you get medical help immediately.

This is a summary of the information the World Health Organization currently offers for those who think they may have COVID-19, after experiencing one or more initial symptoms:

Do not leave your home unless for emergency medical help:

- **Stay at home** and keep a careful watch over your symptoms, as the vast majority of cases of COVID-19 are mild enough to be managed at home, without medical intervention.
- **Consult with your doctor** by phone or online to discuss your symptoms and decide what (if any) action needs to be taken. Do not visit your doctor without calling in advance.
- **Do not use public transportation** in any form if it is necessary to make a journey, as to do so is to put others at risk.

Isolate yourself from other members of your household:

- **Lower the risk of infecting others** within your household by isolating yourself for the duration. If possible, allocate yourself a separate bedroom and bathroom.
- **Avoid sharing everyday items** with members of your family, including plates, cutlery, drinking vessels and electronic devices like mobile phones.
- **Cut off all direct in-person contact** with friends and family members for a minimum of seven days, or longer if your symptoms have still not sufficiently subsided.

***Note:** It is important to ensure that all other members of the household understand their responsibilities and obligations where self-isolation is concerned. According to the World Health Organization, anyone who lives with an individual who displays COVID-19 symptoms must Self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days, as it often takes more than a week for the symptoms of the virus to appear in the first place.*

Call your doctor before visiting:

- **It may not be necessary to visit your doctor** in person, which is why it is essential that you call in advance to arrange a telephone/online consultation where possible.
- **Tell your doctor you may have COVID-19** before attending any urgent appointments you cannot postpone, as they may need to make preparations before your arrival.
- **Be aware of any special instructions** upon arriving at your doctor's office, which may include specific entrances and exits for suspected COVID-19 patients.

Wear an approved facemask at home if necessary:

- **If you have COVID-19 symptoms**, you should wear a facemask at all times when others are in the vicinity to protect them from potential transmission.
- **If someone in your home is sick**, wearing a mask is considered essential - particularly if you are caring for them directly or in close contact.

Note: *If an approved medical facemask is unavailable, some practitioners recommend improvising with a clean scarf or similar garment. They may not provide the same level of protection as a medical facemask, but are considered better than no protection at all.*

Cover your coughs and sneezes:

- **Take extra care** when coughing or sneezing, ensuring your nose and mouth are fully covered with a tissue.
- **Immediately discard used tissues** after coughing or sneezing into them - don't simply leave them on the floor or on surfaces around the room.
- **Always wash your hands** immediately after coughing or sneezing for at least 20 seconds using soap and water. If unavailable, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer instead.

Monitor your symptoms:

- **Keep a close eye on your symptoms** and record temperature readings on a regular basis, which you may need to discuss with your doctor.
- **Use conventional over-the-counter remedies** and preparations to manage the symptoms of mild COVID-19 infection, as advised by your local or national health authority.
- **Keep up to date** with the latest advice, information and recommendations online, published by your healthcare provider or local health department.

Note: *Any change in the symptoms you experience should be taken seriously, irrespective of how minor they are. If in doubt, consult with your doctor by telephone, or organise an online consultation to discuss your symptoms.*

When Should I Seek Emergency Medical Help?

One of the biggest issues experienced by COVID-19 patients is knowing where to draw the line between a mild case and a case that requires emergency medical help. In addition, the fact that many COVID-19 patients present with different combinations of symptoms can make it difficult to know when to make the call.

In accordance with the latest advice from the CDC and the WHO, urgent medical attention should be sought immediately if any of the following occur:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

Under no circumstances should this list be interpreted as conclusive - any new or worsening symptoms that cause concern should be brought the attention of your medical provider at the earliest possible stage.

Caring for Someone with Coronavirus at Home

The most important thing to remember when caring for someone at home with coronavirus is that even if you yourself are experiencing no symptoms of COVID-19, you may still be carrying the disease. As a result, the World Health Organization states that anyone living with a person with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 *must* self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days.

This means that under no circumstances should you leave your home or have any direct in-person contact with anyone else during this time.

Additional guidelines for caring for a COVID-19 patient at home from international public health authorities are as follows:

Monitor their symptoms carefully:

- **Keep a record of their temperature** readings and their general state of health, in order to note any important changes along the way.
- **Contact their healthcare provider** immediately if their condition deteriorates, or if they experience any severe COVID-19 symptoms.
- **Use online resources** set up by your local health authority for advice, or arrange periodic online/telephone consultations to discuss their condition.

Prevent the spread of the virus:

- **Isolate the sick individual** in one room of the home, leaving meals and supplies etc. outside their door to avoid as much direct contact as possible.
- **Do not share any personal items** such as bedding, towels, dishes, electronics, cups and cutlery.
- **Always wear a mask** when around the sick individual and ensure that the patient also wears a facemask, if it is possible for them to do so.

Protect yourself from infection:

- **Prioritise your health and wellbeing** sufficiently, as you will not and be able to care for the sick individual if you also succumb to the virus.
- **Wash your hands even more thoroughly** and more frequently than usual, using hand sanitizer on a regular basis to kill the virus.
- **Step up your home hygiene regime**, paying close attention to all objects and services that are touched most often, such as light switches, worktops and doorknobs.

Help the patient manage their symptoms:

- **Encourage adequate hydration** and ensure that the affected individual drinks plenty of fluids, avoiding dehydration at all costs.
- **Use over-the-counter remedies** to combat the symptoms of mild cases of COVID-19, in accordance with you doctor's advice or that of a pharmacist.
- **Ensure the patient gets plenty of rest** and do your best to keep their spirits up, using video calling software and connected technology to maintain communication.

Note: *Individuals considered to be within the high-risk bracket are advised to seek urgent medical attention the moment they begin displaying any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. If the individual affected is aged 70 or over or has any severe underlying health complaints, you should not attempt to care for them at home unless advised to do so by a qualified professional.*

When to End Self-Isolation at Home

Evidence to date suggests that the vast majority of COVID-19 patients who display mild symptoms will recover from the condition after around seven days. Most minor symptoms disappear relatively quickly, though may linger for a couple of weeks and subside more gradually.

Knowing when to end self-isolation at home is important, as it is still possible to transmit the virus when you yourself are experiencing no noticeable symptoms whatsoever. The World Health Organization currently issues the following guidelines for patients with suspected cases of COVID-19:

- If you are tested to find out whether or not you are still contagious, the authority carrying out the tests will inform you if and when it is safe for you to end self-isolation.
- If you are *not* going to be tested to determine whether or not you are still contagious, official guidelines state that isolation can be ended when:
 - Your temperature has been within the normal range for a minimum of three full days, without using medicine to bring your fever under control, AND
 - Your symptoms in general have eased significantly or subsided entirely, with no signs of worsening, AND
 - You have been self-isolating for a minimum of seven days since first experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19.

Official COVID-19 testing protocols vary from one jurisdiction to the next, though CDC guidelines currently state that two negative tests in a row should be received within the same 24-hour period to confirm recovery from the virus.

In all instances, the guidelines published by your local health department or healthcare provider should be followed to the letter. If in doubt, consult directly with your doctor or healthcare provider (by telephone or online) before ending self-isolation.

Again, it is important to remember that even though you may be feeling better, there's still a chance you could be carrying and transmitting COVID-19 to other people.

Is There a COVID-19 Vaccine?

There is currently no effective vaccine against COVID-19, though the first major clinical trials have already started in China and United States. The most promising prototypes vaccine to date (mRNA-1273) has proven effective in early animal testing, for its potential to boost the immune system in a way that fights the COVID-19 virus.

However, experts have warned that it will be at least 12 to 18 months until a viable vaccine is available. This would mean that an effective vaccination against COVID-19 will not be ready for use until the spring or summer of 2021.

Is There a Treatment for COVID-19?

Likewise, experts are yet to identify an effective or reliable treatment for the more severe cases of COVID-19.

As the vast majority of COVID-19 cases are comparatively mild, the associated symptoms can be treated in the same way as those of the common cold or the flu. According to the National Health Service in the United Kingdom, the symptoms of mild cases of COVID-19 can be managed as follows:

- Get plenty of sleep and rest
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Use paracetamol to lower your temperature
- Seek help if your symptoms worsen

A variety of clinical trials are currently underway worldwide, examining the effectiveness or otherwise of new and existing drugs against coronavirus. Antiviral medications in particular may prove to be effective in the treatment of advanced cases of COVID-19, though this is yet to be confirmed by way of extensive human trials.

Unfortunately, antibiotics have no effect whatsoever on COVID-19, as they are designed to treat bacterial infections, rather than viruses.

Is it Safe to Take Ibuprofen for COVID-19?

It was recently stated by several major health authorities that ibuprofen should *not* be used to treat the symptoms of COVID-19. This was due to rudimentary evidence suggesting that ibuprofen could worsen the symptoms of COVID-19 and make the condition more difficult to treat.

However, the World Health Organization subsequently issued a statement in March 2020 stating that there was no evidence to suggest ibuprofen is unsafe to take. Patients are therefore advised to consult with their own doctors or healthcare providers to assess their suitability or otherwise for ibuprofen, if experiencing the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

What Happens Next?

There's much debate right now as to what the future holds for COVID-19. The problem being that with the pandemic still at a comparatively early stage, nobody really knows what happens next. With most of the world's population having already been placed on mandatory lockdown, evidence suggests that transmission of the virus will slow significantly over the weeks and months to come. In addition, it's theorised that if COVID-19 behaves in a similar way to other coronaviruses, its spread will slow further as temperatures increase during the spring and summer.

Like the common cold and the flu, the likelihood of COVID-19 being eradicated entirely is minimal at best. Instead, the key to combating coronavirus most likely lies in the development of a viable vaccination and effective treatments for the more severe cases.

In the meantime, major health authorities like the CDC and the World Health Organization are advising the public at large to take whatever steps they can to avoid contracting and spreading COVID-19.

We're warned to expect things to get much worse before they get better, though a time will come when COVID-19 can be brought under control and normal life resumes.