

# COVID-19

## What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Viruses can change because they undergo genetic mutation, which is the reason there are different variants of COVID-19.

## What are the signs & symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms are very similar to other illnesses, such as colds and flu:

- a high temperature or shivering (chills) – a high temperature means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted
- an aching body
- a headache
- a sore throat
- a blocked or runny nose
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- feeling sick or being sick

## How can you catch COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spread through close contact with people who have the virus. People with the virus can spread it even if they do not have symptoms. You could still catch or spread it even if you're fully vaccinated or have had the virus before. When someone with the virus breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release small droplets containing the virus. You can catch COVID-19 if you breathe in these droplets or touch surfaces covered with droplets.

The risk of catching COVID-19 is highest indoors and in crowded places.

## How can you help stop the spread of COVID-19?

- get vaccinated against COVID-19
- meet people outside if possible
- open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside
- limit the number of people you meet and avoid crowded places
- wear a face covering when it's hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors or in crowded places
- wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day

Don't:

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

## Treating COVID-19

- get lots of rest
- drink plenty of fluids (water is best) to avoid dehydration – drink enough so your pee is light yellow and clear
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen if you feel uncomfortable

### If you're feeling breathless:

- breathing slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth, with your lips together like you're gently blowing out a candle
- sitting upright in a chair
- relaxing your shoulders, so you're not hunched
- leaning forward slightly – support yourself by putting your hands on your knees or on something stable like a chair

If you feel really unwell and are worried, call 111 or 999.

## References:

- [https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1)
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/how-to-avoid-catching-and-spreading-coronavirus-covid-19/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-care-and-treatments-for-coronavirus/how-to-treat-symptoms-at-home/>