**Coronavirus disease 2019** (**COVID‑19**) is an [infectious disease](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infectious_disease) caused by [severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severe_acute_respiratory_syndrome_coronavirus_2) (SARS-CoV-2).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-9) It was first identified in December 2019 in [Wuhan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuhan), [Hubei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubei), China, and has resulted in [an ongoing pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-Hui14Jan2020-10)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHOPandemic-11) As of 25 August 2020, [more than 23.6 million cases](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_cases) have been reported across 188 countries and territories, resulting in [more than 814,000 deaths](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_deaths). More than 15.3 million people have recovered.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-JHU_ticker-8)

Common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, and [loss of smell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anosmia) and [taste](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageusia).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-autogenerated1-12)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-CDC2020Sym-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHO2020QA-6)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-entuk-anosmia-13) While most people have mild symptoms, some people develop [acute respiratory distress syndrome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acute_respiratory_distress_syndrome) (ARDS) possibly precipitated by [cytokine storm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cytokine_storm),[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-14) [multi-organ failure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiple_organ_dysfunction_syndrome), [septic shock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septic_shock), and [blood clots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_clot).[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-auto-15)[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-16)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-17) The [time from exposure to onset of symptoms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incubation_period) is typically around five days, but may range from two to fourteen days.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-CDC2020Sym-5)[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-18)

The virus is [spread](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transmission_(medicine)) primarily via nose and mouth secretions including [small droplets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Respiratory_droplet) produced by coughing,[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-20) sneezing, and talking.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHO2020QA-6)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-CDCTrans-21)[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-ECDCQA-22) The droplets usually do not [travel through air over long distances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airborne_disease).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHO2020QA-6)[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-23) However, those standing in close proximity may inhale these droplets and become infected.[[b]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-24) People may also become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their face.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHO2020QA-6)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-CDCTrans-21) The transmission may also occur through [smaller droplets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aerosol) that are able to stay suspended in the air for longer periods of time in enclosed spaces.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-:9-25) It is most contagious during the first three days after the onset of symptoms, although spread is possible before symptoms appear, and from people who do not show symptoms.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHO2020QA-6)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-CDCTrans-21) The standard method of [diagnosis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diagnosis) is by [real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real-time_reverse_transcription_polymerase_chain_reaction) (rRT-PCR) from a [nasopharyngeal swab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasopharyngeal_swab).[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-CDC2020Testing-26) [Chest CT](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chest_CT) imaging may also be helpful for diagnosis in individuals where there is a high suspicion of infection based on symptoms and risk factors; however, guidelines do not recommend using CT imaging for routine screening.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-:0-27)[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-acr.org-28)

Recommended measures to prevent infection include frequent [hand washing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand_washing), [maintaining physical distance from others](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_distancing) (especially from those with symptoms), [quarantine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quarantine) (especially for those with symptoms), covering coughs, and keeping unwashed hands away from the face.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-Quar2020-7)[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-Advice_for_public-29)[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-30) The use of cloth face coverings such as a scarf or a [bandana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandana) has been recommended by health officials in public settings to minimise the risk of transmissions, with some authorities requiring their use.[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-:2-31)[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-32) Health officials also stated that medical-grade face masks, such as [N95 masks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N95_mask), should be used only by healthcare workers, first responders, and those who directly care for infected individuals.[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-CDC2020IfSick-33)[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHO2020masks-34)

There are no proven [vaccines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_vaccine) nor [specific](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_drug_development) [antiviral treatments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiviral_treatment) for COVID-19.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHO2020QA-6) Management involves the [treatment of symptoms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palliative_care), [supportive care](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supportive_care), [isolation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isolation_(health_care)), and [experimental measures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_research).[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-cdc21Jan20202-35) The [World Health Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Health_Organization) (WHO) declared the COVID‑19 [outbreak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outbreak) a [public health emergency of international concern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_health_emergency_of_international_concern) (PHEIC)[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-36)[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-37) on 30 January 2020 and a [pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandemic) on 11 March 2020.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-WHOPandemic-11) [Local transmission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_transmission) of the disease has occurred in most countries across all six [WHO regions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WHO_regions).[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_disease_2019#cite_note-38)