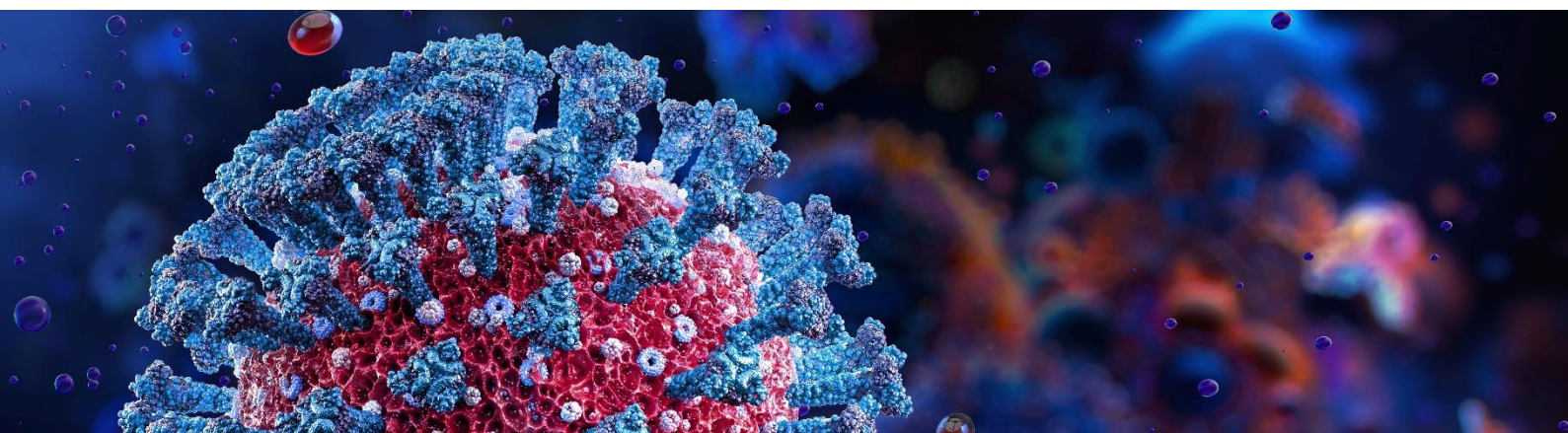


SYMPTOMS

COVID-19 is a viral infection caused by SARS-CoV-2, which is responsible for the recent, ongoing global pandemic. Symptoms can range from mild to severe, taking up to two weeks to appear. A wide variety of symptoms may be indicated, with infection bearing some resemblance to influenza infection, with the common, possible symptoms being listed below ^[1].

- Fever or chills
- Fatigue and nausea
- Loss of smell and/or taste
- Cough and sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Body and muscle aches

Note that, in severe cases, COVID-19 can have serious medical implications which may prove to be fatal. It is important to seek testing if suspecting infection, and more importantly seek urgent medical attention if having trouble breathing, chest pains, confusion or loss of speech/mobility ^[2].



TRANSMISSION

Distribution and Spread

The virus responsible for COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets, spread when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes; as well as, through contact spread via contaminated surfaces. It is crucial to know that the virus can still be spread by infected persons despite not showing any symptoms. The elderly, immunocompromised, or chronic disease patients are all at an increased risk of getting infected; in addition, risk of infection is highest in indoor and crowded spaces. ^[3]

RECOMMENDATION

Treatment

There is no specific treatment against the virus, however many people recover with rest, fluids, and accompanying medication to treat symptoms. Most cases with mild symptoms, and are otherwise healthy, should manage their symptoms at home. In severe cases, hospitalization may be necessary for further treatment, as indicated in the first section.

Prevention

Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others against COVID-19. It is also important to prevent viral spread by practicing good hygiene, including the following ^[3].

- Frequent hand washing and cleaning of 'busy' surfaces
- Wearing a mask indoors, and maintaining social-distancing
- Staying home and avoiding contact with others if sick

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Variants

Like many other pathogens, the SARS-CoV-2 virus continuously replicates, resulting in altered strains with altered properties. As these new variations spread through communities, previously infected and/or vaccinated persons may still get re-infected. Certain variants are more dangerous than others, being labelled as Variants of Concern; however as of the 1st of October 2024, there are none in circulation ⁴.

Long Covid

In certain cases of infection, symptoms have been found to persist chronically, in a disease known as Long COVID or Post-COVID-19 Condition. Clinically this is described as typical symptoms, lasting for at least 2 months and persisting, following a past probable or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection; with no other diagnostic explanation.

Long COVID typically presents 3 months following the original SARS-CoV-2 infection. Symptoms may be episodic and involving multiple organs, presenting with multiple symptoms. Increasing age, especially over 85, amongst other comorbidities, increases risk for such disease.

Vaccination

Basic precautionary measures remain advisable, especially if interacting with sick persons. Vaccination remains core to prevention, with persons, especially those who are immunocompromised or over 65, being advised to remain up to date with the current vaccination schedules. Those who have to date not received any vaccination, are also recommended to get vaccinated.

1. CDC. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) [Internet]. CDC; 2022. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> (accessed February 19, 2023).
2. Coronavirus [Internet]. www.who.int. World Health Organization; 2020. Available from: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_3 (accessed February 19, 2023).
3. Spreading coronavirus [Internet]. NHS. 2021. Available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/how-to-avoid-catching-and-spreading-coronavirus-covid-19/> (accessed February 19, 2023).
4. Variants of Concern [Internet] ECDC. 2024. Available from: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/variants-concern> (accessed October 21, 2024).

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This information has been developed for educational purposes only and is correct at the time of publication. Do not rely solely on the information provided in this publication. If you have any queries regarding this topic or are suffering from any symptoms described, please consult a medical professional immediately.