



JANUARY 2021

ALL ABOUT COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in January 2020 and a pandemic in March 2020. As of 15 March 2021, more than 120 million cases have been confirmed, with more than 2.65 million deaths attributed to COVID-19, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in history.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are highly variable, ranging from none to life-threatening illness. The virus spreads mainly through the air when people are near each other. It leaves an infected person as they breathe, cough, sneeze, or speak and enters another person via their mouth, nose, or eyes. It may also spread via contaminated surfaces. People remain infectious for up to two weeks, and can spread the virus even if they do not show symptoms.

Recommended preventive measures include social distancing, wearing face masks in public, ventilation and air-filtering, hand washing, covering one's mouth when sneezing or coughing, disinfecting surfaces, and monitoring and self-isolation for people exposed or symptomatic. Several vaccines are being developed and distributed. Current treatments focus on addressing symptoms while work is underway to develop therapeutic drugs that inhibit the virus. Authorities worldwide have responded by implementing travel restrictions, lockdowns, workplace hazard controls, and facility closures. Many places have also worked to increase testing capacity and trace contacts of the infected.

The responses to the pandemic have resulted in significant global social and economic disruption, including the largest global recession since the Great Depression. It has led to the postponement or cancellation of events, widespread supply shortages exacerbated by panic buying, agricultural disruption and food shortages, and decreased emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases. Many educational institutions and public areas have been partially or fully closed. Misinformation has circulated through social media and mass media. The pandemic has raised issues of racial and geographic discrimination, health equity, and the balance between public health imperatives and individual rights.

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