

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How is it transmitted?

<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-how-is-it-transmitted>

The English version was updated on 23 December 2021.

How does COVID-19 spread between people?

- Current evidence suggests that the virus spreads mainly between people who are in close contact with each other, for example at a conversational distance. The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. Another person can then contract the virus when infectious particles that pass through the air are inhaled at short range (this is often called short-range aerosol or short-range airborne transmission) or if infectious particles come into direct contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth (droplet transmission).
- The virus can also spread in poorly ventilated and/or crowded indoor settings, where people tend to spend longer periods of time. This is because aerosols can remain suspended in the air or travel farther than conversational distance (this is often called long-range aerosol or long-range airborne transmission).
- People may also become infected when touching their eyes, nose or mouth after touching surfaces or objects that have been contaminated by the virus.