

# How is the new coronavirus transmitted?

---

The new coronavirus (officially named SARS-CoV-2) mainly spreads through the air in respiratory droplets or aerosolized particles released when a person with the virus coughs, sneezes, sings, talks or breathes. People can transmit the virus even if they do not have symptoms. Some new SARS-CoV-2 variants spread more easily than the original strain.

SARS-CoV-2 transmission happens most often indoors, especially within households, in institutional settings such as nursing homes and prisons, and in crowded workplaces and social settings such as bars and parties. Transmission is uncommon outdoors, though it may occur in crowded settings.

SARS-CoV-2 is not thought to be directly sexually transmitted; however, intimate contact during sex— such as kissing—can spread the virus. The coronavirus is detectable in the stool, but fecal transmission appears to be rare.

It is not yet clear whether the coronavirus can be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy or breastfeeding, but this appears to be rare.

Last Reviewed: September 9, 2021

---