

The dawn of 2020 brought along a new and frightening ailment – the novel coronavirus, which attacks the lungs and makes it difficult for the infected person to breathe, decreasing the body’s oxygen supply. Further in this essay, we will take a look at how exactly this virus makes its way from person to person, and the symptoms one can look for in order to self-assess in the case that they might have contracted it.

Studies prove that the deadly virus spreads rapidly, and there are different ways it can do so. The coronavirus can spread through physical contact such as hugs, high fives, and handshakes. It can also spread when someone coughs or sneezes in public without paying heed to safety precautions, such as covering your mouth with your elbow. If this is not followed, small droplets will spread through the air and onto a nearby surface, or perhaps onto people passing by. If the droplets make their way into a person’s body through their mouth or nose, they may start showing symptoms in several days’ time. If someone touches a surface where the droplets may have landed and does not wash their hands, they will also be afflicted with COVID – 19. If an infected person doesn’t go into self-isolation after contracting the virus, the disease will spread to more people. This process is a dangerous chain reaction, because people will keep spreading the disease to each other and the majority of the general population will be infected. To prevent this from happening, we should always cough and sneeze into our elbow and refrain from being in physical contact with other people when this virus is spreading at large. When you *do* go outside, stay in your own area,

and maintain a safe distance from anyone who is outside as well. If you follow these precautionary measures, you can do your part and avoid getting the coronavirus.

Now, we will talk about prevalent symptoms. There are certain signs that you will be able to notice if you have been infected with the coronavirus. Some common symptoms will appear two to fourteen days after possible exposure, such as coughing, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, and loss of smell and/or taste. Other symptoms can be critical, namely persistent pain or pressure in the chest, difficulty breathing, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, and bluish lips and/or face. Lastly, there are uncommon yet dangerous ones like pneumonia and kidney failure, which require prompt medical treatment. If you are currently experiencing any of the symptoms listed above, visit a medical doctor and get tested as soon as possible.

Some medical doctors have identified another peculiar symptom, one that affects the toes and mostly appears in younger patients. With this particular symptom, the toes turn bright red, pink, or purple, and are swollen and feel painful to the touch. Patients may experience itchy toes, and they might also feel like they are burning. Doctors suspect that this symptom is related to the coronavirus, but further testing is necessary before any definitive link can be established.

Ultimately, I want you to know that we are fighting this battle together, and eventually, we will win. Follow proper hygiene rules and maintain a safe distance - about 6 feet - from others so you can protect yourself as well as others from the coronavirus. And finally, a big note of thanks

to all the health workers who are helping us day and night in fighting the novel coronavirus –  
someday, all of our efforts will pay off.