


# How persistent is the coronavirus?

Scientists studying the new coronavirus have found that it can survive for lengthy periods outside the human body, remaining viable in the air for several hours and persisting on surfaces for days

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a white face mask, coughing into her elbow. Her eyes are closed and her mouth is open, showing the mask. The background is a plain, light blue wall.

◀ One cough or sneeze produces thousands of droplets. These can land on other people, clothing and surfaces, but some smaller particles can remain in air

## VIABILITY OF VIRUS IN AIR

■ **Persistence:** Virus still able to infect people for at least three hours when aerosolised into fine, floating particles

■ **Half-life:** 50% of virus particles lose function after about 66 minutes. Amount of viable virus down to 12.5% at end of third hour

## VIRUS TRANSMISSION

■ Between people who are in close contact with one another (within 2m)

■ Through respiratory droplets produced when infected person coughs or sneezes

■ By person touching surface or object that has virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes – but this is not thought to be main way that virus spreads

## PERSISTENCE ON SURFACES

■ **Plastic and stainless steel:** Viable virus detected after three days. **Half-life:** 6 hours 49 minutes for plastic, 5 hours 38 minutes for stainless steel

■ **Cardboard:** Virus not viable after 24 hours. **Half-life:** About 3 hours 30 minutes

■ **Copper:** Shortest survival time – four hours for virus to become inactivated. **Half-life:** 46 minutes