

What is a virus?

A virus is a tiny thing that we cannot see, that gets into our bodies and makes us unwell. There are viruses around us all the time, and our bodies are fantastic at fighting them off. Do you know of any other viruses? Explain that sometimes viruses make you very ill, and some make you feel just a little bit ill. Usually when we have a virus like a cold we still go to work and school unless we feel really bad and then we stay at home until we feel better. Sometimes people get more ill and need help from a doctor especially if their immune system was not very strong when they caught it. When a virus enters your body, your body has a special defence system called your immune system that springs into action to fight it off so you can stay healthy. It makes equally tiny special cells called antibodies to fight the virus and stop it from making your body ill. Your body is AMAZING as it does this all without you knowing. The better your body is at making those antibodies, the easier it is for you to get better. Usually healthier bodies have a stronger immune system, which is why it is always good to try and keep our bodies and minds as healthy as we can.

Normally when we get a virus like chickenpox, or flu we stay at home even if we don't feel bad as we don't want to spread it to some other people who might get very ill with it. The people who get very ill are usually grown-ups, or people with other illnesses that they have all the time. As these viruses have been around for a while, doctors know how to help people get better from them, or have vaccines which are special medicines that stop you getting the virus in the first place by giving you ready made antibodies. It means that everyone else can carry on going to school and work without worrying about catching it.

What is different about coronavirus?

The Coronavirus is a new virus, which has been very good at spreading across the world quickly, which is why we can use the word 'pandemic' to describe it. This took everyone by surprise, so we have had to stay apart from each other as much as possible to give doctors and scientists time to find out about it. They need to find ways to make people who have it better and discover how to stop it spreading, like they have with other viruses we already know about. We do now know much more about it, but not enough yet for everyone to be able to get as close to each other like we were before lockdown.

What are the symptoms?

Not everyone has all the same symptoms of this Coronavirus but it mainly gives people:


- A high temperature
- A dry cough that keeps on going
- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling tired and weak

Usually children have very mild symptoms, or do not know they have it all.

How does corona virus get into our bodies?

We do know that the Coronavirus gets into our bodies through our mouth, nose and eyes.

These are parts of the body that you need to keep particularly safe from droplets in the air, and to keep away from your hands or anything else that may have been touched by someone with Coronavirus. It is even better to stop any virus reaching our face at all, so that is why it is good to try



not to touch your face. Explain that it is very easy to spread, and all we can do is be as careful as we can – it is not anyone’s fault if they catch Coronavirus, or someone they know catches it. All we can do is be as careful as possible and TRY not to catch it or pass it on.