Why practise physical distancing?

As few as 1000 SARS-CoV-2* virus particles may be needed for you to catch Covid-19. That could be 1000 in one breath or eye rub, or 100 inhaled over 10 breaths, or 10 over 100 breaths.

The risks are always higher in enclosed spaces. Changes in air dilute the virus particles.

Sneezing

A sneeze can contain 200 million virus particles in about 30 thousand droplets. These can travel at 200 miles per hour (easily crossing a room) and can stay in the air for as long as 10 minutes.

Coughing

A cough can also contain 200 million virus particles but in about 3 thousand larger droplets that travel at 50 miles per hour. The droplets can cross a small room.

Speaking

An infected person speaking can send out about 200 virus particles per minute.

Breathing

Each outward breath contains 50 to 5 thousand droplets, but these travel slowly and mostly fall to the ground. Breathing only releases about 20 virus particles per minute.

Touching

Droplets from a sneeze or a cough, or from speaking or breathing, can end up on surfaces. Someone touching their face and then a surface can also leave behind virus particles. SARS-CoV-2 viruses might still cause an infection after three days on a plastic surface at ordinary temperatures.

Airborne precautions

Droplet precautions

Contact precautions

Sources: The-risks-know-them-avoid-them, Erin Bromage; Public Health England. Icons from *The Noun Project:* Sneezing by Gan Khoon Lay; Cough by Andrei Yushchenko; Speaking by Azam Ishaq; Sneeze by corpus delicti; Touch by Maciej Świerczek.

*SARS-CoV-2 is the name of the virus that causes the disease, Covid-19. It is a type of coronavirus.