

# HOW COVID SPREADS

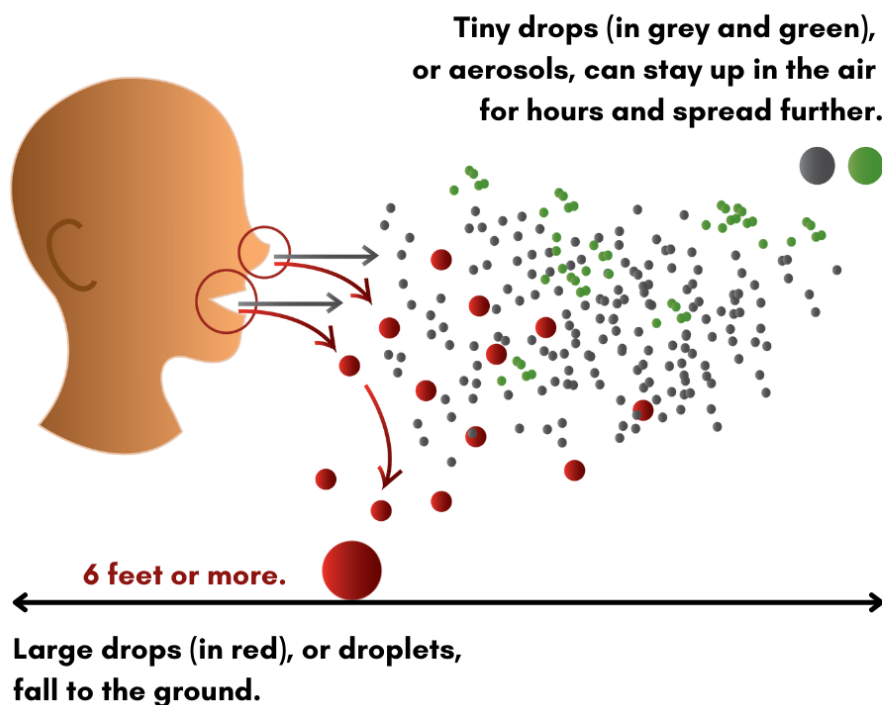
## Through the Air

People's  
CDC

### Droplets and Aerosols

**When someone coughs or sneezes,** some big drops of mucus leave their mouth. These large drops, or “droplets” (in red below), can carry the virus. Large drops can go far before falling to the floor. They can travel 6 to 12 feet. Six feet is the length of one twin mattress.

**When someone talks or breathes,** tiny drops leave their mouths and noses. These tiny drops, or “aerosols” (in grey and green below), can hold the virus and float in the air for hours. The tiny drops can spread around the room. Anyone in the room can breathe them in.



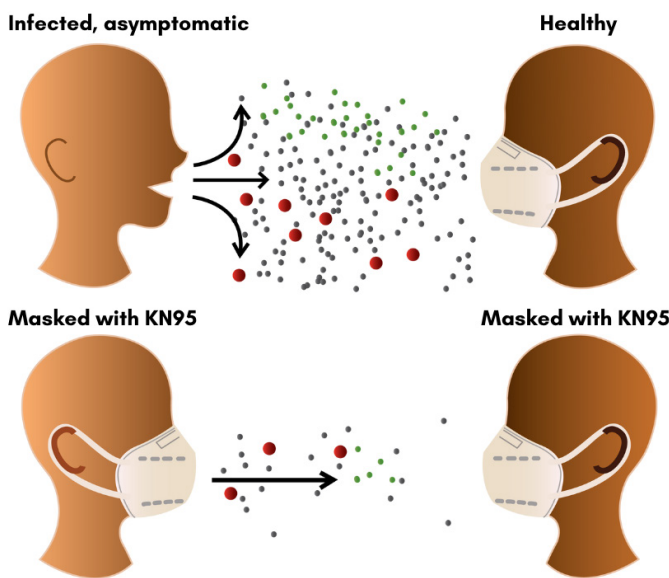
Learn more  
about how  
the COVID-19  
virus travels

# Staying safe

- Keep windows open to bring clean air inside. If possible, have windows or doors on more than one wall open to create **cross ventilation**.
- Spend only short amounts of time indoors when there are a lot of people in the room. This is most important when there is no cross ventilation and no air purifiers.

Check out the **People's CDC Layers of Protection guide**

- Clean the air with air purifiers. They should have “high efficiency particulate air” or HEPA filters.
- When you can, stand far away from other people.
- Vaccines with boosters can reduce spread of the virus.

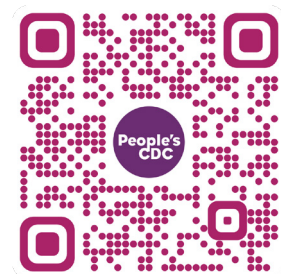


Read the **People's CDC Tipsheet on Masks**

## Why wear a mask?

- Masks reduce the spread of the virus and protect you and those around you.
- The best masks are N95, KN95, KF94 masks or surgical masks.
- Masks should fit so the edges touch your face all around with no gaps.
- Cloth masks do not work to stop tiny drops.
- Masks work best when more people wear them.

For more resources and a weekly weather report on COVID in the United States, visit [peoplescdc.org](https://peoplescdc.org), Follow us on *Twitter*, and join our *mailing list*.



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