

# Rate, timing of altered smell, taste in mild COVID-19 examined

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(HealthDay)—Mildly symptomatic patients with severe acute respiratory

syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection often have alterations in smell or taste, according to a research letter published online April 22 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Giacomo Spinato, M.D., from the University of Padova in Italy, and colleagues examined the prevalence, intensity, and timing of an altered sense of smell or [taste](#) in [patients](#) with SARS-CoV-2 infections. Patients were contacted five to six days after having nasopharyngeal and throat swabs performed and the Acute Respiratory Tract Infection Questionnaire was administered; 202 patients completed the telephone survey.

The researchers found that 64.4 percent of the patients reported any altered sense of smell or taste, with a median Sino-nasal Outcome Test-22 score of 4 (severe). About one-third (34.6 percent) of patients who reported any altered sense of smell or taste also reported a blocked nose. Fatigue, dry or productive cough, and fever were also frequent symptoms (68.3, 60.4, and 55.5 percent, respectively). Onset of an altered sense of smell or taste occurred before other symptoms, at the same time as other symptoms, and after other symptoms in 11.9, 22.8, and 26.7 percent of patients, respectively; 3 percent of patients reported an altered sense of smell or taste as the only [symptom](#). An altered sense of smell or taste was more common among women than men (72.4 versus 55.7 percent).

"If these results are confirmed, consideration should be given to testing and self-isolation of patients with new onset of altered taste or [smell](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic," the authors write.

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