

# Can the coronavirus travel more than 6 feet in the air?

October 1 2020, by The Associated Press

---



AP Illustration/Peter Hamlin

Research indicates it can, but it's not clear how much of the pandemic is caused by such cases.

People spray liquid droplets of various sizes when they cough, sneeze, talk, sing, shout and even just breathe. The [coronavirus](#) can hitchhike on these [particles](#).

The advice about staying at least 6 feet apart is based on the idea that the larger particles drop to the ground before getting very far.

But some scientists have also focused on tinier particles called aerosols. These can linger in the air for minutes to hours, and spread through a room and build up in concentration if ventilation is poor, posing a potential risk of infection if inhaled.

For aerosols, "6 [feet](#) is not a magic distance" and keeping even farther apart is better, says Linsey Marr, who researches airborne transmission of infectious diseases at Virginia Tech.

Some scientists say there's enough evidence about aerosols and the virus to take protective measures. In addition to the usual advice, they stress the need for ventilation and air-purifying systems when indoors. Even better, they say, is to stay outdoors when interacting with others.

© 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Can the coronavirus travel more than 6 feet in the air? (2020, October 1) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-10-coronavirus-feet-air.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--