

I've lost my sense of smell: Is it COVID-19?

December 17 2020



(HealthDay)—While loss of smell is a symptom of COVID-19, don't panic—there are a variety of other possible causes, one expert says.

"It can be due to nasal or sinus inflammation, or other [viral infections](#) distinct from COVID-19," explained Dr. Bobby Tajudeen, director of rhinology, [sinus surgery](#) and [skull base surgery](#) at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

"And it can even occur as a result of some neurodegenerative diseases, like Alzheimer's or dementia, or vitamin deficiencies. Rarely tumors can present with [smell loss](#)," Tajudeen added.

Loss of smell is most often the result of inflammation caused by sinusitis, polyps in the nose and even allergies, and the [loss of smell](#) can be progressive.

Treating the inflammatory condition can restore your sense of smell, he explained in a medical center news release.

But a sudden loss of smell can indicate a viral condition.

"Usually when people have a cold, they have congestion and a [runny nose](#), and they can't breathe through their nose," Tajudeen said. "At the base level that usually causes a temporary reduction in smell. However, once the congestion resolves, in patients with viral-induced smell loss, their smell does not recover."

With COVID-19, loss of smell is among one of the first signs of infection.

"[It] usually occurs for those who have a mild form of the virus," Tajudeen said. "Patients with smell loss are normally at home recovering and not admitted into the hospital or on a ventilator."

With other viruses, recovery of smell could take months and even years. For COVID-19 patients, the sense of smell usually returns in about four

weeks. COVID-19 patients whose loss of smell lasts longer than that should see a specialist, Tajudeen said.

It's a good idea to see an ear, nose and throat specialist anytime you have a loss of smell, he added.

More information: The U.S. National Institutes of Health has more on [loss of smell](#).

Copyright © 2020 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: I've lost my sense of smell: Is it COVID-19? (2020, December 17) retrieved 8 September 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-12-ive-lost-covid-.html>

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.