

Can SARS-CoV-2 be detected in a few exhalations?

February 9 2022



Transmission electron micrograph of SARS-CoV-2 virus particles, isolated from a patient. Image captured and color-enhanced at the NIAID Integrated Research Facility (IRF) in Fort Detrick, Maryland. Credit: NIAID

In a study published by Wiley in *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses*, investigators could detect SARS-CoV-2 in the exhaled breaths and coughs of individuals with COVID-19.

For the study, researchers analyzed exhalations by two different methods during 20 normal breaths, 10 airway opening breaths (which involves deep inhalation followed by relaxed exhalation), and 3 coughs.

Detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA by PCR in aerosols was possible in 10 out of 25 participants. The presence of virus RNA in aerosol was mainly found in [cough](#) samples (8 samples), but also in normal breaths (4 samples) and in airway opening breaths (3 samples).

"Our data confirm findings from other researchers, that SARS-CoV-2 can be detected in aerosol particles

Citation: Can SARS-CoV-2 be detected in a few exhalations? (2022, February 9) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-02-sars-cov-exhalations.html>

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