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MBE world see more cases and manage the pandemic in their own ways, lessons are being learnt.

In the first weeks after a country is affected or a new wave of cases occurs, there is usually adequate hospital and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capacity. But as health services are overwhelmed, patients who would previously have been admitted to hospital for observation are cared for at home; patients who might previously have been ventilated in ICU are kept on hospital wards, with less invasive methods of breathing support such as continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP) to keep them going; and ventilation on ICU is reserved for the sickest of the sick.

In fact, since the first wave of the pandemic, it has become clear that outcomes for most patients are better if mechanical ventilation can be avoided. A move by hospitals to [nurse patients 'prone'](#) (lying on their fronts) as much as possible, and to delay mechanical ventilation where feasible, has been at least in part credited with the improved survival rates seen since the first wave.



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About 5% of patients need in Intensive Care treatment.

Day +14

Average recovery time for mild disease.

Day +21-42

Average recovery time if hospital admission needed.

Day +14-56

Average time to death in most severe cases.

Incubation – how long before symptoms start?

The incubation period of an infection is the time between being exposed to it and developing symptoms. There are several challenges with working out the incubation period for coronavirus:

It is not always possible to know when people were first infected, especially if they may



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Which symptoms come first?

A [World Health Organization report](#) based on 56,000 confirmed cases revealed the most common symptoms to be:



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- Feeling sick or being sick (10%).
- Shortness of breath (13%).
- Diarrhoea (7%).
- Abdominal pain (7%).

There does not appear to be any particular pattern in the order of symptom development. Some people will start with a cough; others will develop fever, with cough arriving only a few days later. Among my patients, exhaustion and aching all over appear to be common early signs.



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you need to call 999 if:

- You are too breathless to speak more than a few words; or
- Your breathing has become harder and faster in the last hour, even when you are not doing anything.

You need to call **111** and speak with a nurse if:

- You are feeling so ill that you have stopped doing everything you normally do (eg watching TV, using your phone, getting out of bed); or
- You have suddenly become confused (this can be a symptom of lack of oxygen to the brain).

The final outcome – how likely am I to die?



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A [model-based analysis](#) of the widely varying statistics on death rates for coronavirus, based on figures from 37 countries, suggests that even among people with more severe disease, the 'case fatality' ratio (the proportion of people with confirmed disease who died) is about 1.4% - about 1 in 300 among people under 60, 1 in 15 among all over-60s and 1 in 7 among over-80s.

[Another paper](#) backs up the idea that your risk of dying, even if you end up in hospital, depends largely on your age. While a significant number of people needing ICU treatment will not recover, recovery rates for people who do not need ventilation are good.

How worried should I be?

The great majority of people with coronavirus will have mild or moderate disease and will make a full recovery within 2-4 weeks. But even if you are young and healthy - meaning your



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