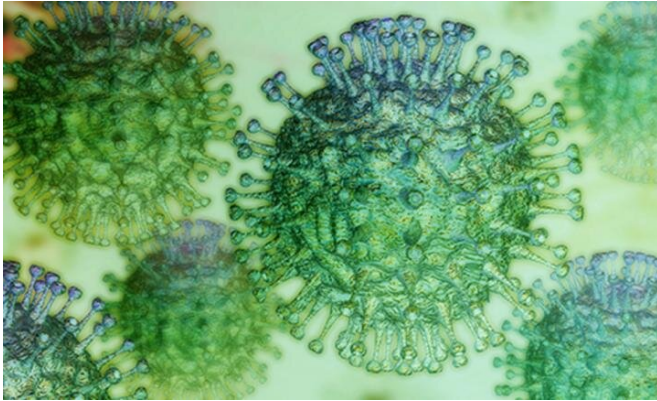


UK adds loss of taste and smell to coronavirus symptoms

18 May 2020



Coronavirus. Credit: European Centers for Disease Control

Britain added a loss of taste and smell to its list of coronavirus symptoms Monday and broadened eligibility for tests as it seeks to prevent a second wave of cases when the lockdown eases.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government is racing to implement a new "track and trace" regime to control COVID-19, after nearly 35,000 deaths—the worst toll in Europe.

"From today, all individuals should self-isolate if they develop a new continuous cough or fever or anosmia," the chief medical officers of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland said.

"Anosmia is the loss or a change in your normal sense of smell. It can also affect your sense of taste as the two are closely linked."

A major study by King's College London last week found that people with a positive test result were three times more likely to report loss of smell and taste than those who returned a negative [test](#).

Report author Tim Spector said that Public Health

England's (PHE) previous insistence on only including fever and cough as major symptoms meant thousands of cases were missed.

At the government's daily media briefing, England's deputy chief medical officer, Jonathan Van-Tam, denied this, saying anosmia was usually followed by a cough and fever and so "you don't miss those cases".

But he said it made a "small difference" to improving diagnosis.

The World Health Organization and other countries including the United States also now count it as a [symptom](#).

Johnson's government also announced that anyone over the age of five with coronavirus symptoms could be tested, with more than 100,000 tests a day now being carried out.

Some 21,000 contact tracers have been recruited to try to identify and contain local outbreaks of [coronavirus](#), while a mobile phone app that could be used is currently being trialed.

Almost two months after a nationwide lockdown was introduced, the [death toll](#) in Britain is slowing, rising 160 in the last 24 hours to 34,796.

Johnson has begun urging people back to work in England, but schools and shops are not expected to reopen until at least June 1.

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