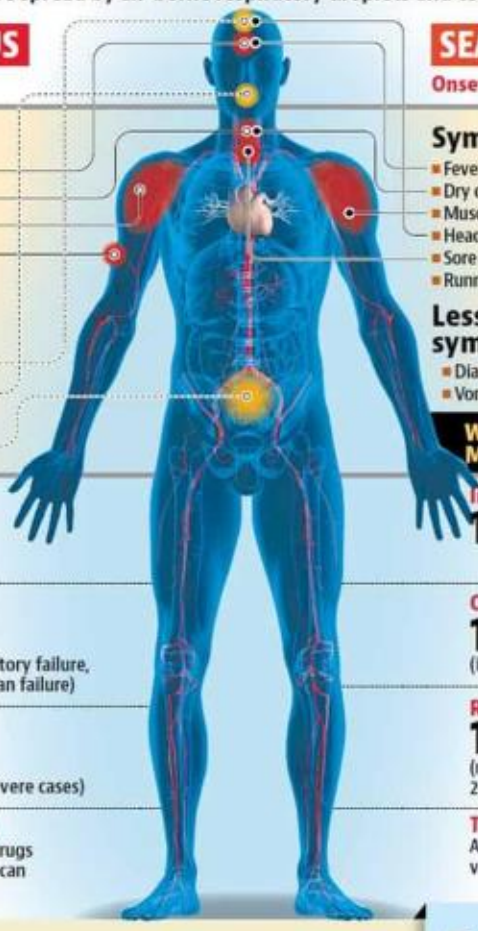
CORONAVIRUS, FLU, COLD?

As the number of coronavirus cases rise, some key differences set coronavirus apart from the seasonal flu and the common cold — mainly the intensity of the symptoms and the recovery period. A guide at identifying the differences in the three conditions

All three, however, are spread by air-borne respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces



CORONAVIRUS

Onset: Sudden

Symptoms

- Fever
- Dry cough
- Muscle ache
- Fatigue

Less common symptoms

- Headache
- Coughing up blood (haemoptysis)
- Diarrhoea

Incubation:
1-14 days,
may go up to 24 days

Complications:
5% cases
(acute pneumonia, respiratory failure, septic shock, multiple organ failure)

Recovery:
2 weeks
(mild cases); 2-6 weeks (severe cases)

Treatment or vaccine
No vaccines or anti-viral drugs available; only symptoms can be treated

SEASONAL FLU

Onset: Abrupt

Symptoms

- Fever
- Dry cough
- Muscle ache
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose

Less common symptoms

- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting

Incubation:
1-4 days

Complications:
1% cases
(including pneumonia)

Recovery:
1 week
(mild cases);
2 weeks (severe cases)

Treatment/vaccine
An annual seasonal flu vaccine is available

COMMON COLD

Onset: Gradual

Symptoms

- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sneezing
- Sore throat

Less common symptoms

- Low grade fever
- Muscle or body ache
- Headache
- Fatigue

Incubation:
2-3 days

Complications:
Extremely rare

Recovery:
1 week
for most cases; may last as long as 10 days

Treatment/vaccine
No treatment, but doctors advise treating symptoms

WHAT THIS MEANS If you have a stuffy/runny nose or are sneezing, you likely **DO NOT** to have coronavirus

SEVEN KINDS OF CORONA

Seven strains of coronavirus (CoV) that infect humans have been identified. These cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV)

Harmless

- Serotype 229E
- Serotype OC43
- Serotype NL63
- Serotype HUK1

These cause symptoms of the common cold, and rarely cause severe pneumonia

Dangerous

These are known to cause more severe disease. These are:

1. Sars-CoV which causes severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars)

2. Mers-CoV was that causes Middle East respiratory syndrome (Mers)

3. Sars-CoV2 that causes coronavirus disease (Covid-19)

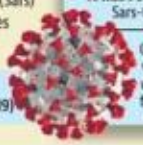
The unknowns of Sars-CoV2

Sars-CoV2 is closely related (with 88% identity) to two bat-derived Sars-like coronaviruses (bat-SL-CoV-ZC45 and bat-SL-CoVZXC21) collected in 2018 in Zhoushan, eastern China

It has 79% genetic affinity with Sars-CoV; 50% with Mers-CoV

The Sars-CoV2 receptor-binding domain structure, which allows a virus to latch on to and enter a cell, is similar to Sars-CoV, despite amino acid variation at some key residues.

Little is known about **Sars-CoV2,** studies on Sars-CoV provide clues to its behaviour and ability to infect



On smooth surfaces such as tables, phones etc, Sars-CoV retains its viability for 5 days at 22-25°C and relative humidity of 40-50%, which is typical for air-conditioned rooms. Though this may vary for Sars-CoV2, experts say this is a good indicator for its behaviour