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REVISED & UPDATED
JULY 2020



Coronavirus

A book for children
about Covid-19



Consultant: Professor Graham Medley
Professor of Infectious Disease Modelling,
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Nosy Crow made this book quickly, to meet the needs of children and their families. No one involved was paid anything for their work.

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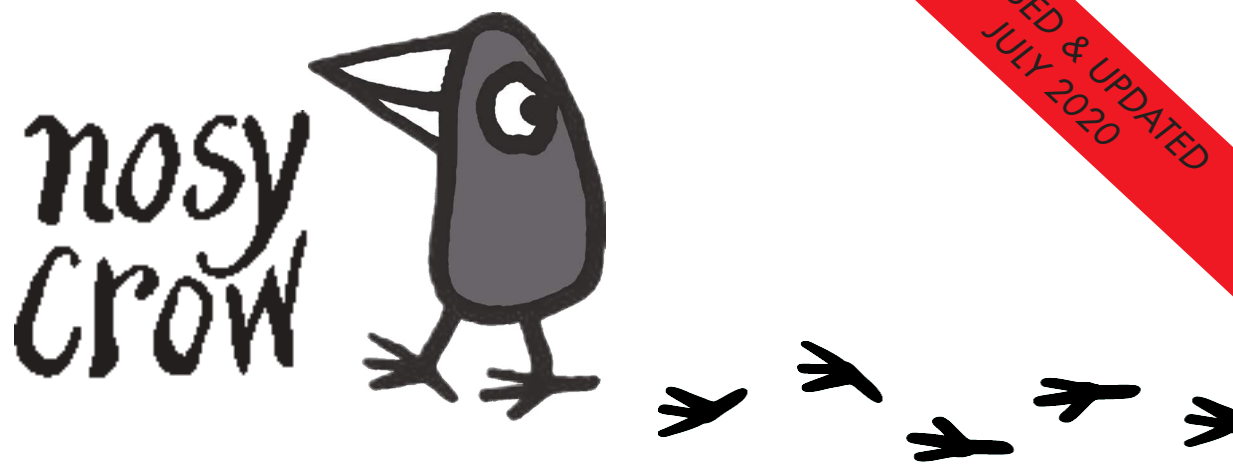
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WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?



Coronavirus is a kind of **virus**.

Viruses are tiny germs that are so small that you can't see them.

They are so light that they can float through the air in tiny drops of water, and they can sit on your skin without you feeling them. If some of these germs get inside you, they can use your body to make more germs, and that can make you ill.



There are lots of different sorts of coronaviruses and some of them infect people. If you have been infected with one of these coronaviruses, all you probably had was a snotty nose or a cough.



But when this **completely new** coronavirus germ gets inside a human body, it causes an illness called Covid-19. When people talk about “catching coronavirus”, they are talking about this illness.

HOW DO YOU CATCH CORONAVIRUS?

Because this coronavirus is new, scientists don't know everything about it yet. But they think that there are two main ways that people can catch it.

Coronavirus germs live in people's throats and mouths. When someone who has coronavirus coughs or sneezes or breathes out, the germs come out of their nose and mouth in tiny drops of water.



Though you can't see the germs, you can sometimes see these tiny drops. In cold weather, they make a cloud of steam! So if someone else accidentally breathes in the air with coronavirus germs in it, they would probably get the illness. The closer you are to someone the easier it is for you to breathe in these tiny drops.



It's easy to get coronavirus germs from inside your body on your hands when you touch your nose or your mouth.

If the person with coronavirus germs on their hands uses a door, the invisible germs can stay on the handle for hours. When someone else opens the door, they get the germs on their hands too.

And if they touch their nose or mouth, the germs can get into their body.



So you can also catch coronavirus by touching things that someone with the virus has already touched.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CATCH CORONAVIRUS?

Some people, particularly most children, hardly feel ill at all when they get coronavirus. But they still have coronavirus germs in their body that they could give to someone else without knowing.



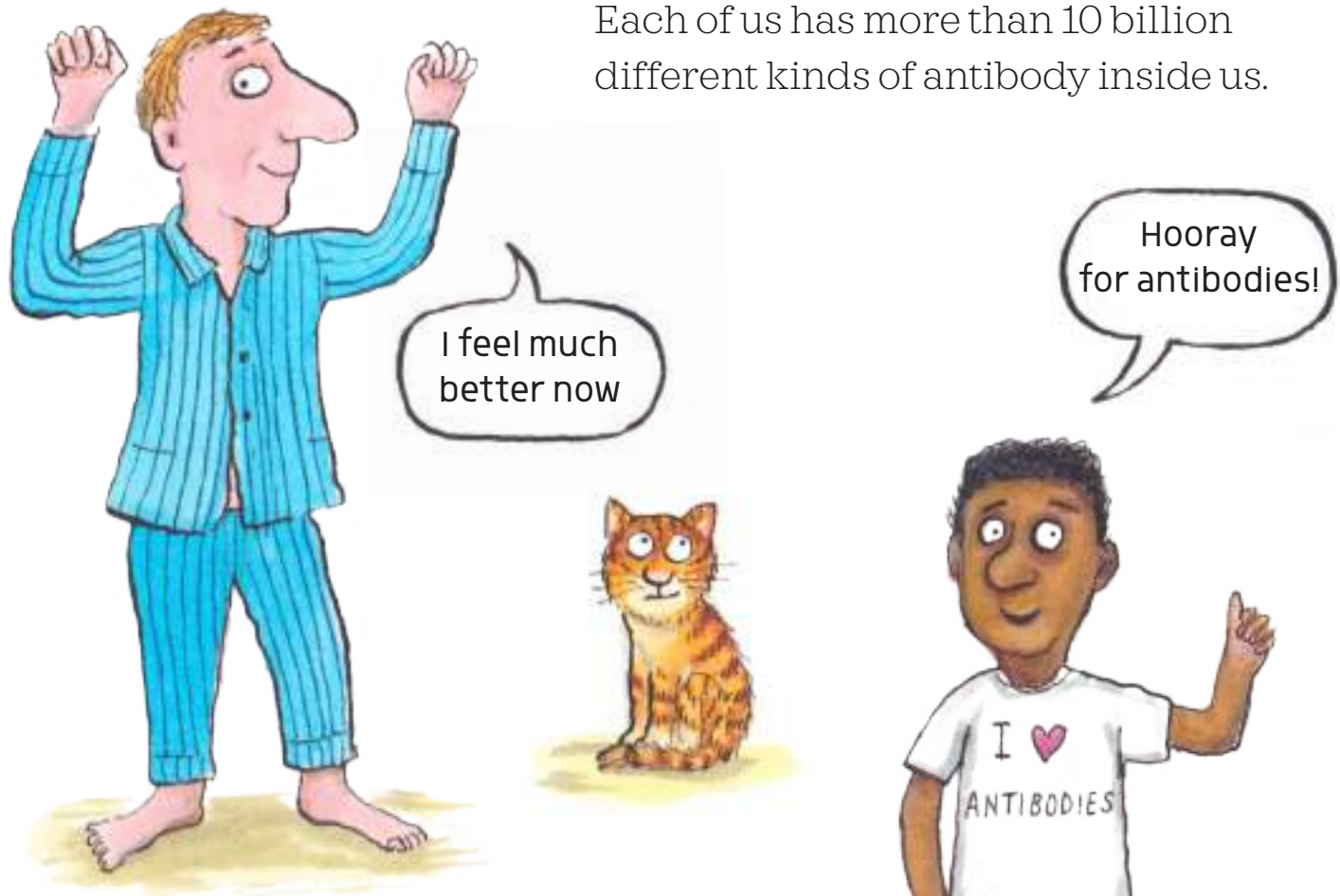
When they get coronavirus, lots of people get coughs and a high temperature. Many people lose their sense of taste or smell. Some people also have a headache or aches all over their body.

Most people are ill for a couple of weeks. But bodies are amazing things. When a new germ, like coronavirus, gets into someone's body, their body knows that the germ shouldn't be there and starts killing it.



The body has an amazing weapon against viruses called **antibodies**. Tiny cells in your blood make antibodies to fight each different virus invader. The antibodies catch the viruses, then the blood cells swallow them up and destroy them and then the person gets better.

Each of us has more than 10 billion different kinds of antibody inside us.



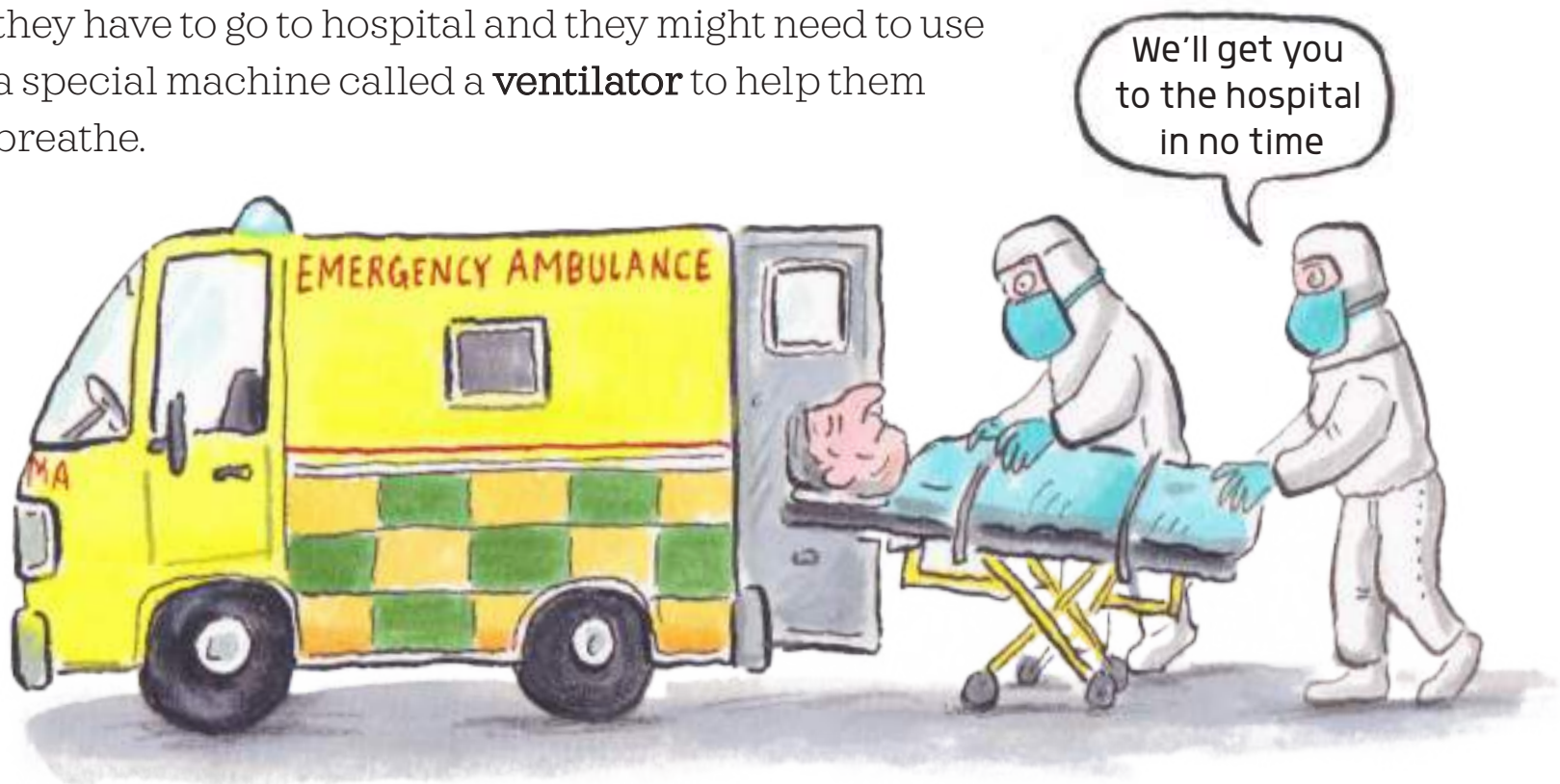
That means there are more different antibodies inside you right now than there are people in the world!

SO WHY ARE PEOPLE WORRIED ABOUT CATCHING CORONAVIRUS?

Nearly everyone has a body that can fight coronavirus. But there are some people who find it harder. Because this is a new virus, we don't really know what makes some people more ill than others. But we do know that some people, like people who are more than 70 years old or already have other illnesses like cancer, can get very ill.



They need more help to fight coronavirus. This means they have to go to hospital and they might need to use a special machine called a **ventilator** to help them breathe.



However, sometimes even this might not be enough to help them get better and, if that happens, then sadly they might die.

That's why they really need to stay at home, away from anywhere they might catch coronavirus.

They won't be able to have visitors. That might mean you won't be able to go and visit some of your family for a while, to help keep them safe.



But that doesn't mean you can't talk to them. Maybe you can call them on the phone or use a computer.



IS THERE A CURE FOR CORONAVIRUS?

Most people get better from coronavirus by themselves. But doctors and scientists want to help everyone do that quickly and safely.

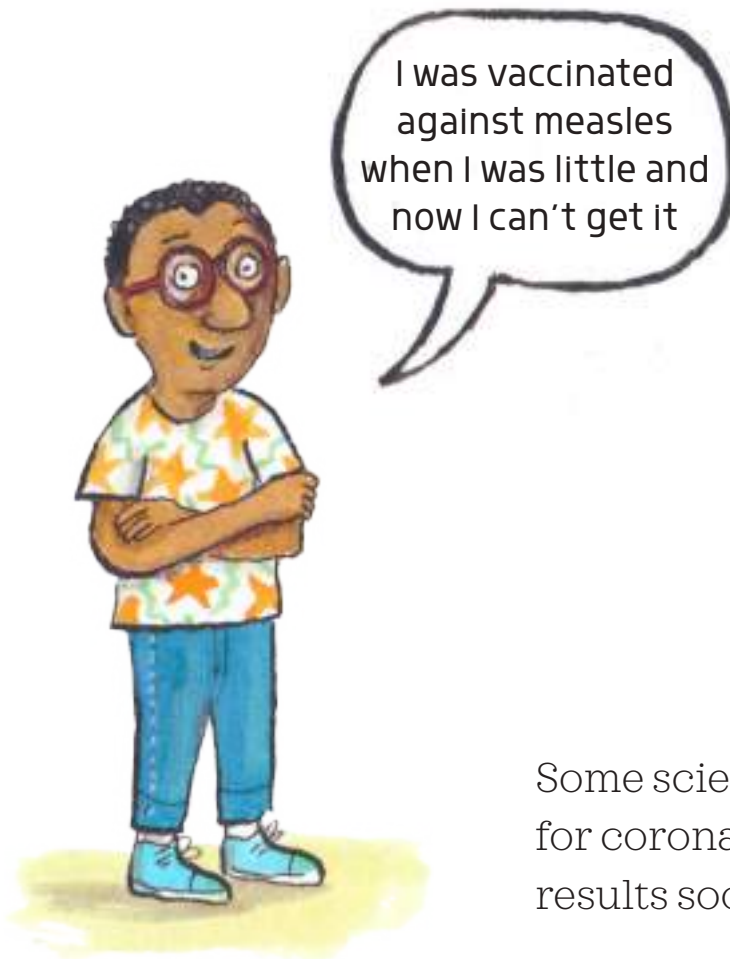
There is no cure for coronavirus yet because it is a new illness. But doctors have been trying out medicines they know about and they have found one that helps some really ill people.

Scientists are also working on making completely new medicines to cure coronavirus that no one has ever had before.



Another thing that thousands of scientists around the world are working on is a **vaccine** against coronavirus.

A vaccine is a special medicine that is usually injected into your body while you are healthy. There are lots of different ways to make vaccines. But all vaccines have weak germs or parts of germs in them. They can't harm you, but they teach your body to make the antibodies that you need to kill the germs. This means you can't catch the virus, so you don't get ill, and also you can't give it to anybody else.



It takes many months to make a new medicine. Before you can give it to lots of people, you have to make sure that it is safe for everyone, so you have to try it out carefully on a few people at a time. Then, when you know it works and is safe, you have to make enough for everyone who needs it.

Some scientists are already testing vaccines for coronavirus and we should find out the results soon.

WHY ARE WE SPENDING MORE TIME AT HOME?

To help stop more people catching and spreading coronavirus, the government looks at how many people have coronavirus right now. This helps them decide what they need to tell us to do. So when there is less virus around, we can do a bit more, but when there is more virus around, we need to be more careful.

It is important not to get too near people you don't live with in case they give you coronavirus or you give it to them. So sometimes places where lots of people are together – like schools, libraries and shops – might be closed or have rules about how many people can be inside them.

If you are at school, your teachers might tell you there are some new rules. You might have to sit at a different table from your friends or only be able to play with some of them in the playground.

You might be asked to wear a mask to cover your nose and mouth in places where lots of people are together, like buses and trains. Although the mask might sometimes be a bit uncomfortable, it's important that you keep it on and try not to touch it.





I'm working with nurses to help people who are ill



I'm working so you can still buy food

Sometimes you might be able to see some of your friends or family who you don't live with. You might have to meet them outside and not get too close to them.

The grown-ups you live with might need to do their work at home. Some grown-ups might still be going to work if they have a job where they need to go out, like doctors or nurses or people who work in shops or people who deliver things to our homes.

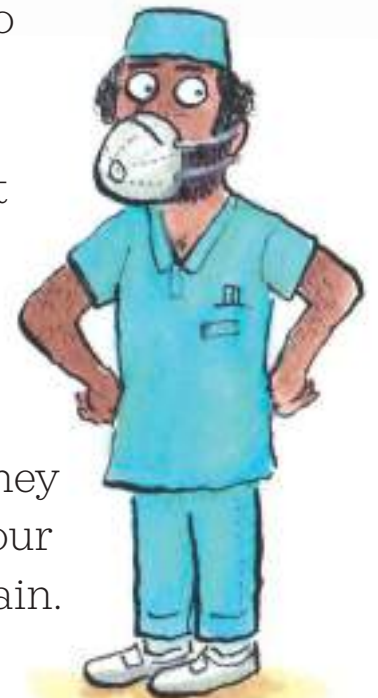
I'm working with doctors to help people who are ill

Sometimes you and the people you live with might even be asked to stay home together for a while, and only go outside if you need to buy food or to exercise.

If you or anyone in your family feels ill, or thinks they might have coronavirus, you will need to stay in your home until the government says you can go out again.

We all have to do these things to stop the virus from spreading and protect the people who will find it hard to fight coronavirus.

I'm working to deliver the things families need



WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

You are already helping a lot by following the government's rules. But you can also help by taking extra care to make sure you don't catch or pass on coronavirus to anybody else.

Did you know that viruses are destroyed by soap? So if you wash your hands really carefully and for long enough, you won't have any coronavirus germs on your hands. You can sing a song while you wash your hands to make sure you are washing them for the right amount of time - long enough to sing Happy Birthday twice!





If you have to wipe or blow your nose, use a tissue and put it in the bin straight away. Remember to wash your hands too, because coronavirus lives in your snot and it can get on to your hands from the tissue.

If you have to cough or sneeze, do it into the inside corner of your elbow, not on to your hand. Then you can't give coronavirus to other people that way.



If everyone does these things, it will make a big difference!

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Sometimes, spending more time together can be great fun. But sometimes you or the other people you live with might feel bored, or sad, or angry, or worried. So another important thing you can do is to be kind to people at home.

If you live with brothers or sisters, you can try not to fight with them.



Remember, the grown-ups who look after you might also feel sad or angry or worried sometimes. You can help them by doing what you are asked to do or giving them a big hug.



These are normal things to feel. Talk about your feelings to a grown-up who looks after you. If you are going to school at the moment, maybe you could talk to a teacher or another member of staff. Or maybe you could talk to a teacher or someone else in your family on the phone or using a computer or tablet.



If you are not at school all the time right now, do your school work. It will help to keep your mind busy, so you won't be bored. And then, when you do go to school, you will have learned a lot!

If you don't have a screen of your own, talk about how you can share screen time fairly with everyone who needs it.

Grown-ups who live with you might have to do work at home as well. If they do, you can help them by not disturbing them when they are trying to work. Then they will be more likely to have time to do fun things with you. Maybe you could make a list of things that you would like to do with them.



WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT?

This is a strange time for everybody,
and it's happening all over the world.



But if we are all careful, and we follow the rules and remember to wash our hands and use tissues, then we can stop coronavirus spreading. And that gives the scientists and doctors time to work out how to cure the illness and maybe stop people getting it altogether by using medicines and vaccines.

One day, though nobody knows exactly when, you'll be able to visit everyone you love who doesn't live with you, play with all your friends and do lots of other things that you enjoy but that you can't do right now.





**One day,
this strange time
will be over.**



**We d
t o g e**



**do it
together!**



MORE INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN

If you want to learn more and keep up to date with news about the coronavirus:

CBBC Newsround

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround>

If you feel worried or anxious, here are some links to places that can help:

Childline

A free helpline that you can call any time to talk about any worries you might have.

Telephone: 0800 1111

They also have more advice here:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus>

Young Minds

A charity which supports young people's mental health.

They have more advice on what to do if you are feeling anxious here:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

MORE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CARERS

British Psychological Society

Advice on talking to children about illness

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/advice-talking-children-about-illness>

Contact

Coronavirus information for parents of disabled children

<https://www.contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/coronavirus-information-for-families-with-disabled-children/>

The National Autistic Society

Coronavirus resources for autistic people and families

<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus/resources>

The Samaritans

Free 24-hour support helpline

Telephone: 116 123

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

Unicef

What you need to know about the virus to protect you and your family

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19>

HELPING THE NHS

Doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and all the other people who make up the health service in our country do an amazing job every day, but are working especially hard while people are getting ill with the coronavirus. NHS Charities Together (registered charity 1186569) supports NHS staff and volunteers caring for coronavirus patients. If you would like to donate some money to help them, you can do so here:

<https://www.nhscharitiestogether.co.uk/>

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

Nosy Crow is an award-winning, small, independent children's book publisher. We made this book because we felt that children and parents might find it useful. We publish lots of different kinds of books for children aged 0-12. You can find out about us here:

www.nosycrow.com

OTHER LANGUAGES

An earlier version of this book is now available digitally in over 60 other languages, produced by many other publishers around the world. You can find a full list of them here:

<https://nosycrow.com/coronavirus-languages>

