

explainity explains

topic: Corona terminology

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Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, there have been many different terms buzzing around. It's time to clarify them once and for all:

Corona simply refers to the family of viruses. There are seven coronaviruses that can make people ill, like cold viruses for example.

SARS CoV-2 is the official name for the coronavirus that's been going around since the end of 2019. But the virus is just a pathogen. It **can** make people ill, but not inevitably.

Covid-19 is the illness caused by the pathogen.

One way to detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus in people is the so-called "**RT-PCR**" test. This method involves taking mouth, nose, and throat swabs from the patient. In a lab, these swabs are analyzed for traces of RNA, which is the viral genome. The analysis takes about four to five hours and is pretty pricey.

A similar, yet cheaper method is the **antigen test**. Here, the samples are just analyzed for a layer of protein found on the viral envelope. This test provides results within an hour, but it tends to be less precise and may also detect other coronaviruses in addition to the SARS virus.

The **antibody test** is different. Antibodies first develop when the illness is clearing or already gone. A blood test should show if the patient has previously been infected with coronavirus. But this test doesn't indicate any acute illnesses and is also not 100% accurate.

Until you've had your results from the PCR or antigen test, you have to spend a certain amount of time in quarantine. It's also advised that family members and roommates self-isolate too, as you can infect others even if you have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all.

For all three methods, there are also rapid tests that can either be analyzed in a lab or at home. However, these methods are - as of early October 2020 - usually less reliable and not yet fully approved in many countries.

You see, the situation is changing every day. So, with that in mind: Stay healthy!

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