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### **What is COVID-19?**

**COVID-19 is a new disease that is caused by a coronavirus.** Coronaviruses are circular viruses with spiky proteins sticking out of them, which makes them look like they have a crown. Corona means crown.

There are many coronaviruses that have been circulating for years. The common cold, SARS and MERS are all caused by different coronaviruses. In 2019, scientists discovered a new coronavirus was circulating. They named the disease it caused COVID-19. **CO = Corona, VI = Virus, D = Disease, 19 = 2019**

### **What is the Delta variant? Is it more dangerous than COVID-19?**

We mentioned that COVID-19 is caused by a virus. Viruses constantly change, creating what are called variants.

Scientists study the variants carefully to see whether they spread more easily, make people sicker or make the virus resistant to treatments or vaccines.

The Delta variant was first found in the United States in March 2021, and it was first identified in India in December 2020. In July 2021, this variant was the most common form of COVID in the United States.

The Delta variant seems to spread more easily and quickly than other variants of COVID-19. This means the Delta variant may lead to more cases of COVID-19. An increase in the number of cases will put more strain on healthcare resources, lead to more hospitalizations, and potentially more deaths.

So far, studies suggest that the current vaccines work on the Delta variant and other circulating variants. This means vaccinated people who get sick with the Delta variant are less likely to be hospitalized or to die from COVID-19.

Other common variants are: Alpha, which was initially found in the United Kingdom; Beta, which was initially found in South Africa; and Gamma, which was first found in travelers from Brazil. Scientists will continue to study these and other variants.

### **How can I protect myself from the Delta variant of COVID-19?**

The advice for avoiding the Delta variant remains the same. **Get a COVID-19 vaccine** when it is available to you. **Wear a mask** that covers your nose and mouth to help protect yourself and others. **Stay 6 feet apart** from others who don't live with you. **Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.** **Wash your hands often with soap and water.** Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variant.html>

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