



ASHRAE EPIDEMIC TASK FORCE

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Information on SARS-CoV-2

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Information on SARS-CoV-2



SARS = Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
Co = Coronavirus
V = Virus

- SARS-CoV-2 = severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2

There is a SARS-CoV from 2003:

- SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) was a virus identified in 2003. SARS-CoV is thought to be an animal virus from an as-yet-uncertain animal reservoir, perhaps bats, that spread to other animals (civet cats) and first infected humans in the Guangdong province of southern China in 2002.

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Why do the virus and the disease have different names?

- Viruses, and the diseases they cause, often have different names. For example, HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. People often know the name of a disease, but not the name of the virus that causes it.

There are different processes and purposes for naming viruses and diseases.

- Viruses are named based on their genetic structure to facilitate the development of diagnostic tests, vaccines and medicines. Virologists and the wider scientific community do this work, so viruses are named by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV).



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WHO = World Health Organization

How are Viruses and Diseases Named?

- Diseases are named to enable discussion on disease prevention, spread, transmissibility, severity and treatment. Human disease preparedness and response is WHO's role, so diseases are officially named by WHO in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).
- ICTV announced “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)” as the name of the new virus on 11 February 2020. This name was chosen because the virus is genetically related to the coronavirus responsible for the SARS outbreak of 2003. While related, the two viruses are different.



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Co = Coronavirus

VI = Virus

D = Disease

19 = 2019

COVID-19 = coronavirus disease 2019

- WHO announced “COVID-19” as the name of this new disease on February 11, 2020, following guidelines previously developed with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

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Where did SARS-CoV-2 come from?

- The first human cases of COVID-19 were identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. At this stage, it is not possible to determine precisely how humans in China were initially infected with SARS-CoV-2 and thereby developed the disease COVID-19.