

How far does coronavirus travel in the air? Preliminary study finds virus on tiny particles of air pollution

[Doyle Rice](#), USA TODAY, April 27, 2020

How far does coronavirus travel in the air? Preliminary study finds virus on tiny particles of air pollution.

<https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/2020/01/29>

(Interjection – a search of medrxiv.org for the topic “covid-19 and pollution” resulted in 109 articles on May 12, 2020, so there is strong scientific research interest in that association. From the facts observed, to date, it can easily be seen how useless tRump’s actions were in closing off travel to China... wrong timing or another example of scientific ignorance? ~ Don Chapin)

- The virus could be carried over longer distances, increasing the number of people infected.
- Previous studies have shown that air pollution particles do harbor microbes.
- The study has not undergone the scientific peer-review process so the findings must be taken with caution.

Italian scientists have found the coronavirus on tiny particles of air pollution, a [new preliminary study](#) said.

This means the virus [could be carried over longer distances](#), increasing the number of people infected, according to the Guardian.

However, researchers warn that the study has not undergone the scientific peer-review process, so the findings must be taken with caution. "At the present, no assumptions can be made concerning the correlation between the presence of the virus on (particulate matter) and COVID-19 outbreak progression," the study said.

"Particulate matter" are tiny grains of pollution that can be dangerous to human health because they can get deep into our lungs. Those particles, often far smaller than the width of a human hair, are produced by car tailpipes, power plant smokestacks and burning materials.

Air samples were collected at two sites in Bergamo province in northern Italy's Lombardy region, the area of the country hit hardest by the pandemic, [Weather.com](#) said. Testing found a gene highly specific to COVID-19 in multiple samples from the province, one of the most polluted in Italy.

Despite the note of caution about the research, study lead author [Leonardo Setti](#) of Italy's Bologna University said it's important to determine if the coronavirus might indeed be carried more widely by air pollution.

"I am a scientist and I am worried when I don't know," he told the Guardian. "If we know, we can find a solution. But if we don't know, we can only suffer the consequences."

Coronavirus: [Here's all the things you may have missed about the coronavirus.](#)

Coronavirus live updates: [US nears 1M cases; Birx says social distance through summer; NY cancels primary](#)

The findings are not at all far-fetched: Previous studies have shown that air pollution particles do harbor microbes and that pollution is likely to have carried the viruses causing bird flu, measles and foot-and-mouth disease over considerable distances, the Guardian said.

Outside experts not involved in the new study say their findings are plausible and should undergo further investigation.

[Earlier studies](#) have found that people exposed to higher levels of air pollution were more likely to die from COVID-19, weather.com said.

The study appeared in "[medRxiv](#)," which is described as the "preprint server for health sciences."

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