

Losing sense of taste and smell could be 'early warning sign' of coronavirus infection

Nearly two weeks ago, Alessandro Laurenzi, a biologist working as a consultant in Bologna, Italy, was mowing the grass in his garden when a friend stopped him and said the mower reeked of fuel. "I couldn't smell anything at all," he tells The Scientist. That was in the morning. A few hours later, he went to have lunch and realized he couldn't smell the food he was about to eat and when he took a bite, he couldn't taste it either. Within a few days, he developed symptoms of COVID-19.

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Documenting such peculiar symptoms is important, [researcher Abdul Mannan Baig] tells The Scientist, because the loss of smell and taste could be an early warning sign of [SARS-CoV-2 infection](#). Based on the literature, British ear, nose, and throat doctors have now called for adults who lost those senses to quarantine themselves in an attempt to tamp down the spread of the disease, [The New York Times](#) reports. The symptoms, Mannan adds, also suggest that the virus has the ability to invade the central nervous system, which could cause neurological damage and possibly play a role in patients dying from COVID-19.

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