

Biosecurity threats from engineered pathogens is increasing. How vulnerable are we — and what can be done?

A report on pandemic prevention, co-authored by [chemical weapons](#) expert Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, highlights the threat posed by synthetic biology and warns of the possibility of “bad actors” developing and spreading genetically engineered pathogens that are far more virulent than Covid.

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The report said the coronavirus has shown that even a relatively non-virulent pathogen can have a huge impact. A pathogen specially modified to be as virulent as possible could create huge disruption.

“Covid has shown that even low-virulent pathogens can have strategic impact and create a massive terror effect. The area of biosecurity in the food production sector could also be a target area in future. Viruses and bacteria aimed at the food chain have the potential for massive disruption and destabilisation,” it said.

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In the report Mr de Bretton-Gordon, a former British army colonel, warns that because the UK is an international travel hub it is at particular risk and says a pandemic early warning system must include the capability to detect and track emerging viruses.

“In an age of increasingly democratised gene-editing capabilities alongside continued international turbulence, the world must be prepared for the next biological event, whether synthetic or natural, deliberate or accidental,” he wrote.

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)