

How the coronavirus death toll compares to other pandemics, including SARS, HIV, and the Black Death

HILARY BRUECK, SHAYANNE GAL
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Eric Gaillard/Reuters

4&T=(https://www.businessinsider.com.au/coronavirus-2020-3) has

live-updates-latest-news-2020-3) has
killed more than 44,000 people around
the world.

- It's extremely contagious and spreads from person to person easily through close contact.
- The most severe coronavirus cases often include difficulty breathing (https://www.businessinsider.com.au/coronavirus-day-by-day-symptoms-patients-2020-2) and may require hospitalisation, in which patients may be hooked up to ventilators to blow more oxygen (https://www.businessinsider.com.au/new-york-ventilator-shortage-may-force-sharing-but-its-risky-2020-3) into their lungs.
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The novel coronavirus has already killed more than 3,000 people in China, 9,000 in Spain, and 12,000 in Italy, and it isn't



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In the US, the White House's coronavirus task force recently estimated (<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/coronavirus-death-statistics-americans-civil-war-2020-3>) that in a best-case scenario, the virus may kill upward of 200,000 people nationwide.

“We’re very worried about every city in the United States, and the potential for this virus to get out of control,” US coronavirus-response coordinator Deborah Birx told NBC News on Monday morning

(<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/dr-deborah-birx-predicts-200-000-deaths-if-we-do-n1171876>). “If we do things together well, almost perfectly, we could get in the range of 100,000, 200,000 fatalities.”

As of April 1, here’s how the death count of COVID-19 compared with other pandemics

(<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/who-declares-coronavirus-pandemic-covid19-2020-3>) that have spread far and wide, with devastating consequences:

COVID-19 death toll compared to other pandemics

PANDEMIC	DATES	DEATH TOLL
 Smallpox	~3,000 years–1979 ^A	>300,000,000 ^B
 Black Death	1347–1351	~225,000,000 ^C
 Spanish Flu (H1N1)	1918–1919	50,000,000
 HIV/AIDS	1981–Present	23,600,000–43,800,000
 Cholera	1899–1923 ^D	>1,500,000
 Asian Flu (H2N2)	1957–1958	1,100,000
 Russian Flu (likely H2N2)	1889–1890	1,000,000
 Hong Kong Flu (H3N2)	1968–1970	1,000,000
 Swine Flu (H1N1)	2009–2010	151,700–575,400
 COVID-19	2019–Present	44,150 ^E
 Ebola	2014–2016	11,300
 MERS	2012–Present	866
 SARS	2002–2003	774

^AWorldwide eradication in 1979

^BMore than 300M since 1900 alone

^C~25 million in Europe, and estimates of >200M others worldwide

^DData from the 6th Cholera pandemic

^EData as of April 1, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. EST

Note: Historical images of H2N2 not available. Generic influenza virus pictured.

Sources: Britannica; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; History.com; CDC; WHO; American Museum of Natural History; American Society for Microbiology; US Dept of Health and Human Services; United Nations; Johns Hopkins

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Shayanne Gal/Business Insider

COVID-19 is extremely contagious and spreads easily from person to person through close contact.

It's too early to calculate the overall death rate from the viral illness (<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/coronavirus-covid-19-questions-mortality-origins-cause-unknowns-2020-3>), but so far the most severe coronavirus cases often include some difficulty breathing (<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/coronavirus-covid19-day-by-day-symptoms-patients-2020-2>), and many of those require hospitalisation. In intensive care, patients may be hooked up to ventilators, which help blow more oxygen (<https://www.businessinsider.com.au/new-york-ventilator-shortage-may-force-sharing-but-its-risky-2020-3>) into a person's lungs.

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