

REVISED & UPDATED
• NEW ADDITIONAL CONTENT •

By Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson & Nia Roberts

Illustrated by Axel Scheffler



Coronavirus and Covid

A book for children about
the pandemic



Consultant: Professor Graham Medley

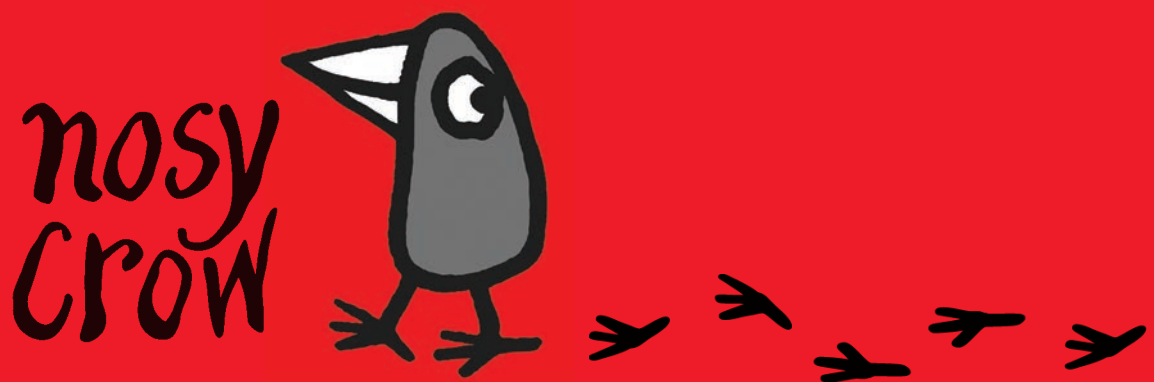
Professor of Infectious Disease Modelling, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

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crow**

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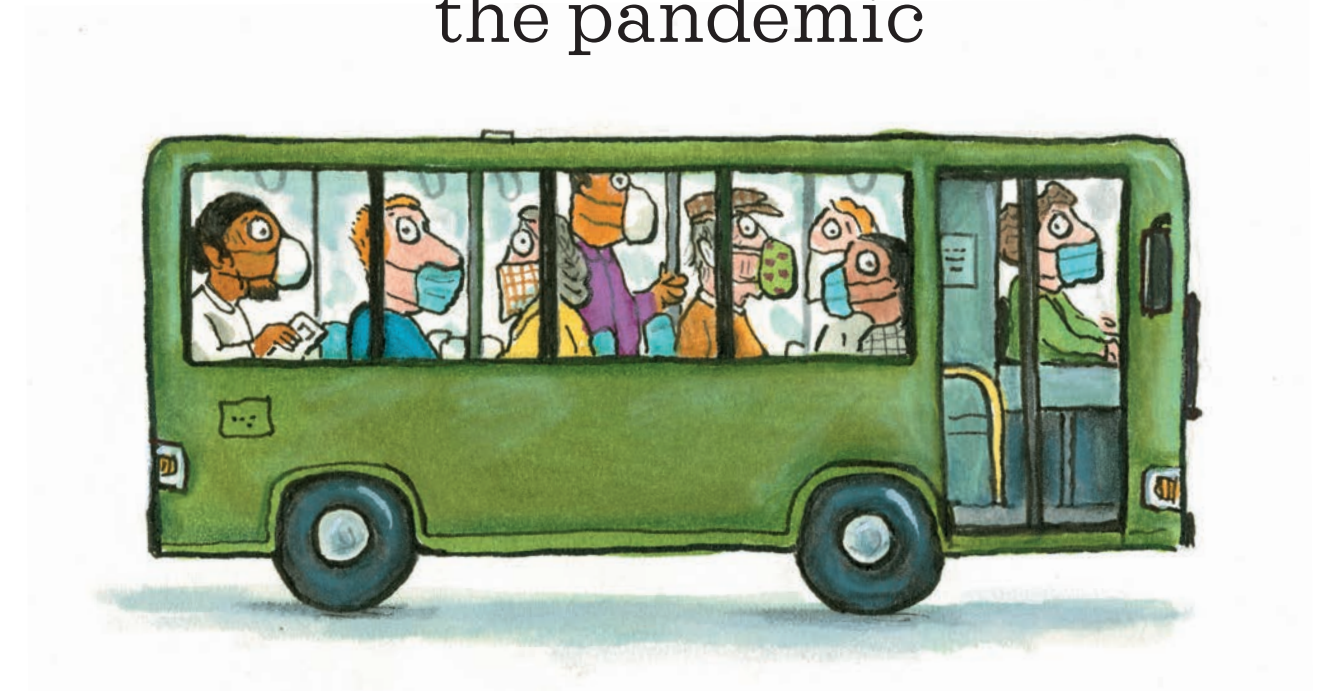
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There's a new word you might have heard.

You might hear people talking about it or you might hear it on the news.
This word might be the reason that you're not going to school or
can't visit your friends. It might be the reason why the grown-up
or grown-ups who look after you are at home.

The word is



C O V I D



But what
is it and why is
everyone talking
about it?

WHAT IS COVID?



Covid is an illness caused by a **virus** called a coronavirus.

Viruses are tiny germs that are so small that you can't see them.

They are so light that they can float through the air in tiny drops of water, and they can sit on your skin without you feeling them. If some of these viruses get inside you, they can use your body to make more viruses, and that can make you ill.



Do I have germs on me now?



Yes, but hardly any of them are dangerous

There are lots of different sorts of coronaviruses and some of them infect people. If you have been infected with one of these coronaviruses, all you might have had was a snotty nose or a cough.



ACHOO!



Bless you!
Have a tissue



Could be a coronavirus...

But when this completely new coronavirus gets inside a human body, it causes an illness called **COVID-19**. When people talk about “catching Covid”, they are talking about this illness.

HOW DO YOU CATCH COVID?

Because this coronavirus that causes Covid is new, scientists don't know everything about it yet. But they think that there are two main ways that people can catch it.

The coronavirus lives in people's throats and mouths. When someone who has Covid coughs or sneezes or breathes out, the germs come out of their nose and mouth in tiny drops of water.



Though you can't see the germs, you can sometimes see these tiny drops. In cold weather, they make a cloud of steam! So if someone else accidentally breathes in the air with the coronavirus in it, they might get the illness. The closer you are to someone the easier it is for you to breathe in these tiny drops.



It's easy to get the coronavirus from inside your body on your hands when you touch your nose or your mouth.

If the person with the coronavirus on their hands uses a door, the invisible germs can stay on the handle for hours. When someone else opens the door, they get the germs on their hands too.

And if they touch their nose or mouth, the germs can get into their body.



So you can also catch Covid by touching things that someone with Covid has already touched.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CATCH COVID?

Some people, particularly most children, hardly feel ill at all when they get Covid. But they still have the coronavirus in their body that they could give to someone else without knowing.



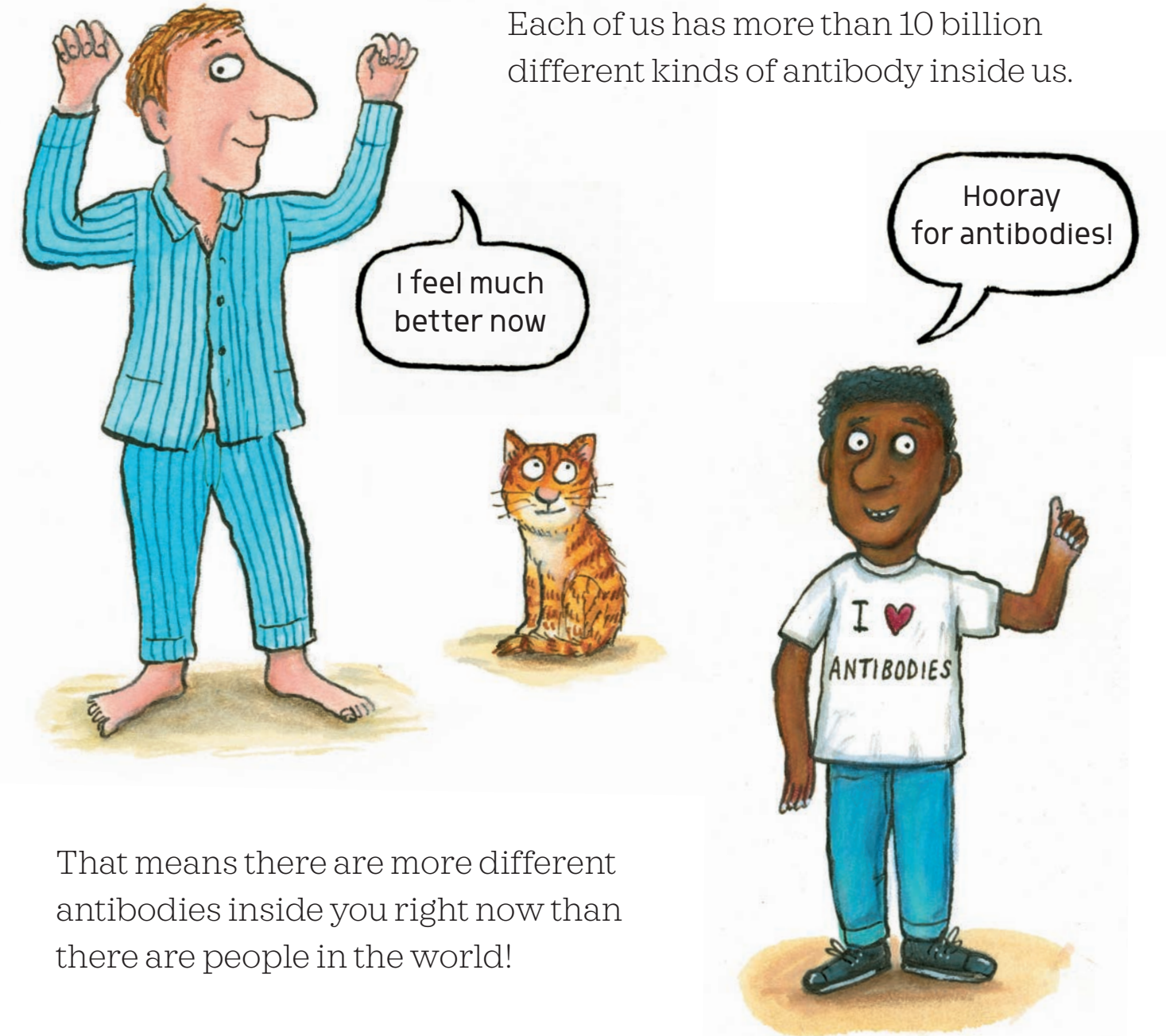
When they get Covid, lots of people get coughs and a high temperature. Many people lose their sense of taste or smell. Some people also have a headache or aches all over their body.

Most people are ill for a couple of weeks. But bodies are amazing things. When a virus, like the coronavirus, gets into someone's body, their body knows that the virus shouldn't be there and starts killing it.



The body has an amazing weapon against viruses called **antibodies**. Tiny cells in your blood make antibodies to fight each different virus invader. The antibodies catch the viruses, then the blood cells swallow them up and destroy them and then the person gets better.

Each of us has more than 10 billion different kinds of antibody inside us.



That means there are more different antibodies inside you right now than there are people in the world!

SO WHY ARE PEOPLE WORRIED ABOUT CATCHING COVID?

Nearly everyone has a body that can fight Covid. But there are some people who find it harder. Because this is a new virus, we don't really know what makes some people more ill than others. But we do know that some people, like people who are more than 70 years old or already have other illnesses like cancer, can get very ill.



They need more help to fight Covid. This means they have to go to hospital and they might need to use a special machine called a **ventilator** to help them breathe.



However, sometimes even this might not be enough to help them get better and, if that happens, then sadly they might die.

That's why they really need to stay at home, away from anywhere they might catch Covid.

They won't be able to have visitors. That might mean you won't be able to go and visit some of your family for a while, to help keep them safe.



But that doesn't mean you can't talk to them. Maybe you can call them on the phone or use a computer.



HOW CAN DOCTORS, NURSES AND SCIENTISTS HELP PEOPLE WITH COVID?



Most people get better from Covid by themselves. But doctors, nurses and scientists want to help everyone do that quickly and safely.

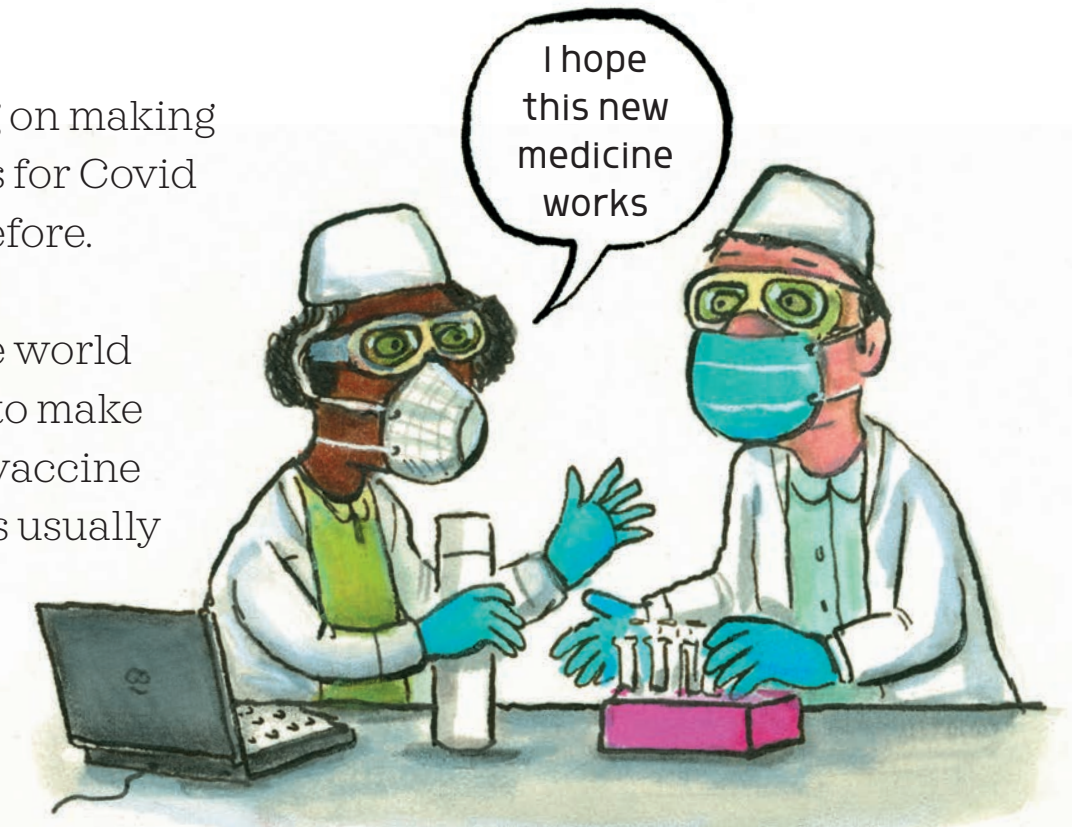
Covid is a new illness, so we are still discovering ways to help people get better. Some medicines that we already know about can help ill people's bodies fight the coronavirus, so they are using these medicines in hospitals.

We now know that other things can help too, like lying ill people on their front in bed to help them breathe better.

Some people can take a lot longer to get better from Covid than other people. Nobody knows why yet. They can still feel unwell months after they have had the illness. This is called **long Covid**. Doctors, nurses and scientist are trying to find ways to help them too.

Scientists are also working on making completely new medicines for Covid that no one has ever had before.

Many scientists around the world have also discovered how to make vaccines against Covid. A vaccine is a special medicine that is usually injected into your body with a tiny needle while you are healthy.



There are lots of different ways to make vaccines. But all vaccines have weak germs or parts of germs in them. They can't harm you, but they teach your body to make the antibodies that you need to kill the germs.

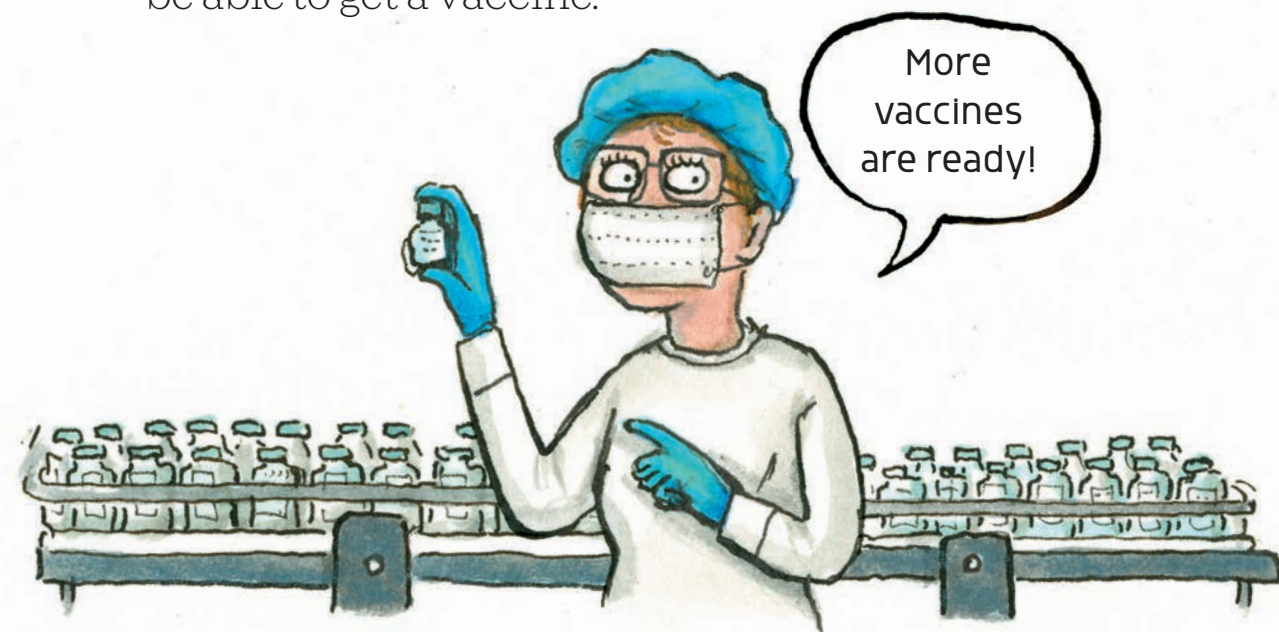
If someone is given a vaccine against Covid, it means if the coronavirus gets into their body, they might not get ill at all, and if they do, they probably won't get very ill. It is also harder to pass the coronavirus on to anybody else.

NOW WE HAVE A VACCINE, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

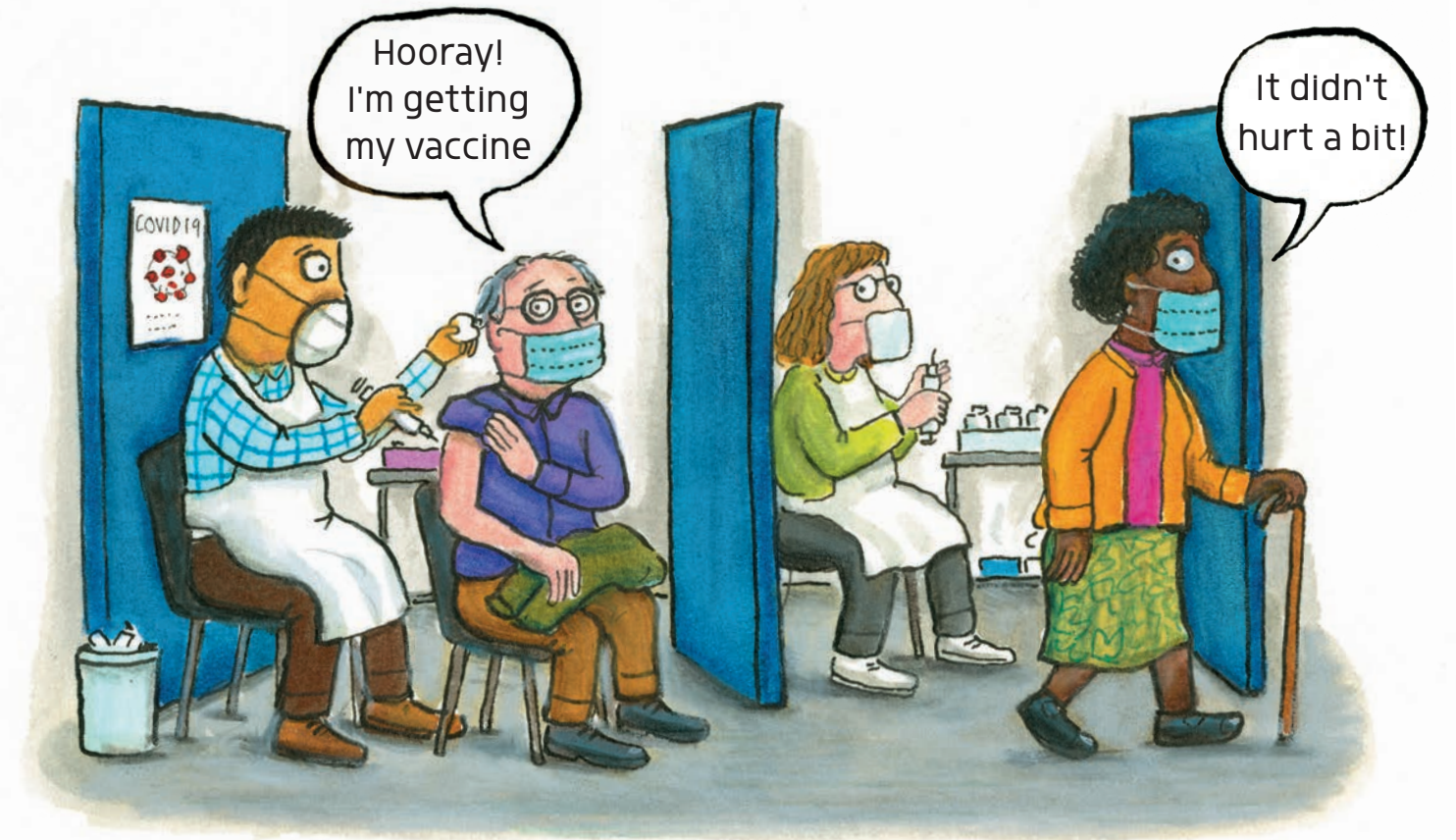
It takes many months to make a new vaccine. Before you can give a vaccine to lots of people, you have to make sure that it is safe for everyone, so you have to try it out carefully on a few people at a time. Then, when you know it works and is safe, you have to make enough for everyone who needs it.

Now that scientists know that vaccines against Covid they have made are safe, they are working with the government to be able to give a vaccine to everybody.

It will take a long time to make enough of the vaccines for everybody in the country, so the government is giving them to the people who need them most first, like older people, nurses and doctors. After that, all grown-ups will be able to get a vaccine.



So far, the vaccines have only been tried out on grown-ups. Once scientists make sure they are safe for children, perhaps then children will be given a vaccine too. Remember that most children don't get very ill from Covid, though.



When most grown-ups in the country have had a vaccine against Covid, it will be harder for the virus to find ways to spread between people.

As time passes, all viruses change, so there will be more and more slightly different kinds of the coronavirus in different places around the world. Some vaccines might not work as well as others on some of these kinds of the coronavirus. This might mean scientists will have to change the vaccine, and people might need to be given a new one from time to time.

WHY ARE WE SPENDING MORE TIME AT HOME?

To help stop more people catching and spreading Covid, the government looks at how many people have Covid right now. This helps them decide what they need to tell us to do. So when there is less of the coronavirus around, we can do a bit more, but when there is more of the coronavirus around, we need to be more careful.

It is important not to get too near people you don't live with in case they give you Covid or you give it to them. So sometimes places where lots of people are together – like schools, libraries and shops – might be closed or have rules about how many people can be inside them.

If you are at school, your teachers might tell you there are some new rules. You might have to sit at a different table from your friends or only be able to play with some of them in the playground.

People might be asked to wear masks to cover their noses and mouths in places where lots of people are together, like shops or buses. Although the mask might sometimes be a bit uncomfortable, it's important that they keep it on and try not to touch it.



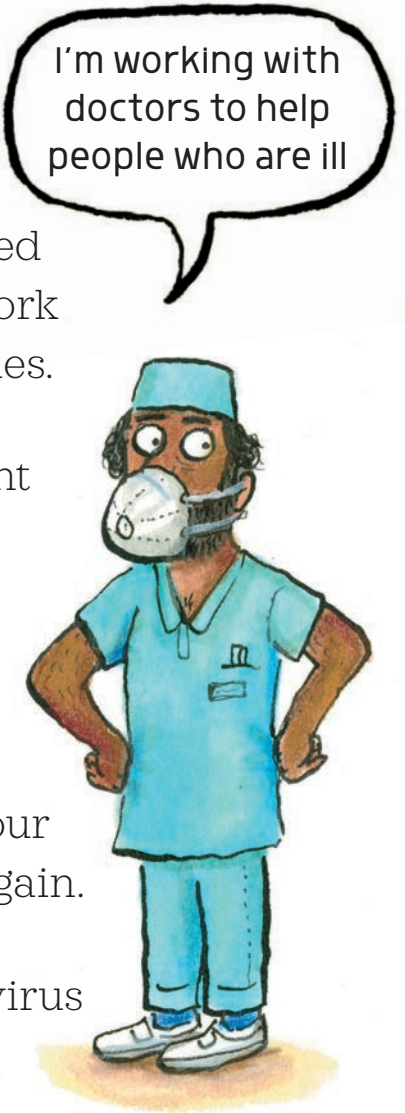
Sometimes you might be able to see some of your friends or family who you don't live with. You might have to meet them outside and not get too close to them.

The grown-ups you live with might need to do their work at home. Some grown-ups might still be going to work if they have a job where they need to go out, like doctors or nurses or people who work in shops or people who deliver things to our homes.

Sometimes you and the people you live with might even be asked to stay home together for a while, and only go outside if you need to buy food or to exercise.

If you or anyone in your family feels ill, or thinks they might have Covid, you will need to stay in your home until the government says you can go out again.

We all have to do these things to stop the coronavirus from spreading and protect the people who will find it hard to fight Covid.

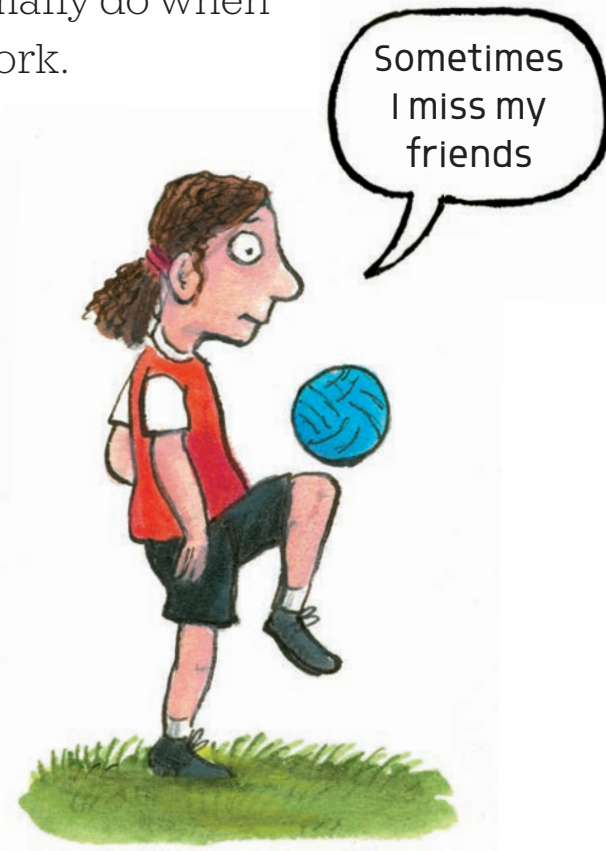


WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE AT HOME MORE OF THE TIME?

Sometimes being at home with the people you live with can be great fun. You can do things together that you wouldn't normally do when you are at school or when the grown-ups are at work.



But sometimes I feel bored



Sometimes I miss my friends



Sometimes I feel angry



Sometimes I feel sad

These are all normal things to feel. And everyone who lives with you probably feels the same way sometimes, even if they try not to show it.

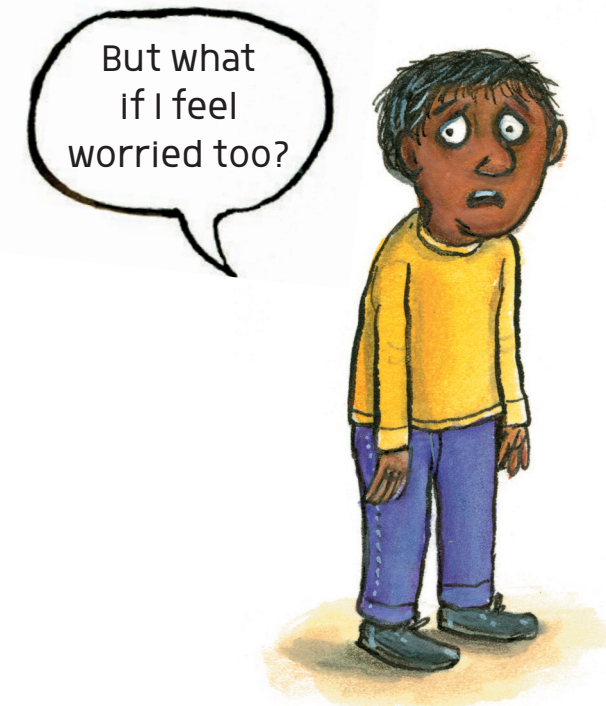


Bored!



Bored!

The grown-up or grown-ups who look after you might also feel worried. Sometimes they might feel worried about work. Sometimes it might be hard to buy the things that you all need, and that might worry them too.



But what if I feel worried too?



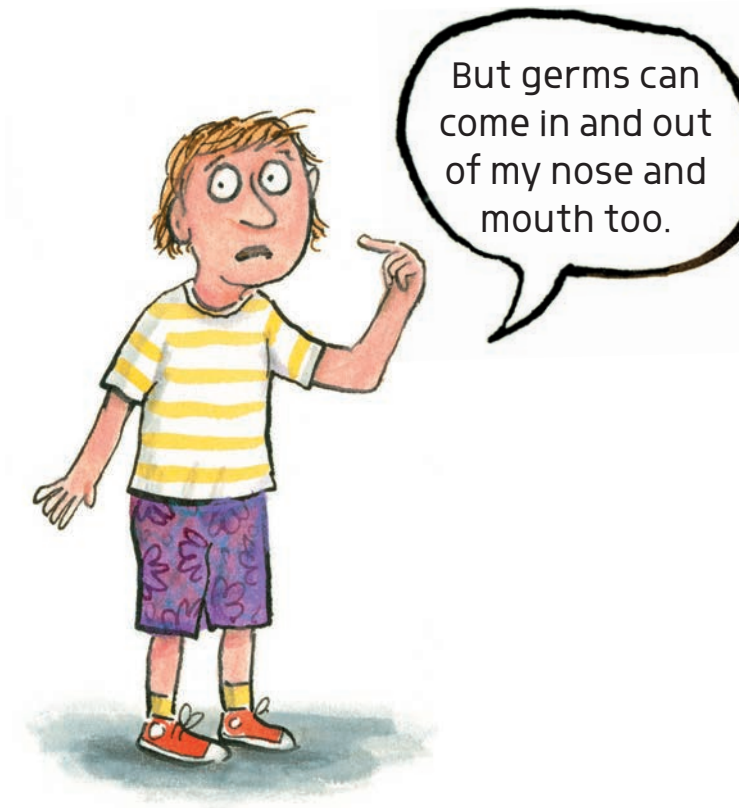
Bored!

If you are worried, talk about your worries to a grown-up who looks after you. If you are going to school, maybe you could talk to a teacher. Or maybe you could talk to a teacher or someone else in your family on the phone or using a computer or tablet.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

You are already helping a lot by following the government's rules. But you can also help by taking extra care to make sure you don't catch or pass on Covid to anybody else.

Did you know that viruses are destroyed by soap? So if you wash your hands really carefully and for long enough, you won't have the coronavirus on your hands. You can sing a song while you wash your hands to make sure you are washing them for the right amount of time – long enough to sing Happy Birthday twice!



If you have to cough or sneeze, do it into the inside corner of your elbow, not onto your hand. Then you can't give Covid to other people that way.



If you have to wipe or blow your nose, use a tissue and put it in the bin straight away. Remember to wash your hands too, because the coronavirus lives in your snot and it can get on to your hands from the tissue.



If everyone does these things, it will make a big difference!

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Another important thing you can do is to be kind to the people that you live with. Things will be different and perhaps difficult for all of you.

If you live with brothers and sisters, you might sometimes find them annoying. But try not to fight with them.



If you live with grown-ups, maybe you can help them by doing what you've been asked to do or giving them a big hug.



If you are not at school, do your school work. It will help to keep your mind busy, so you won't be bored. And then, when you go back to school, you will have learned a lot!

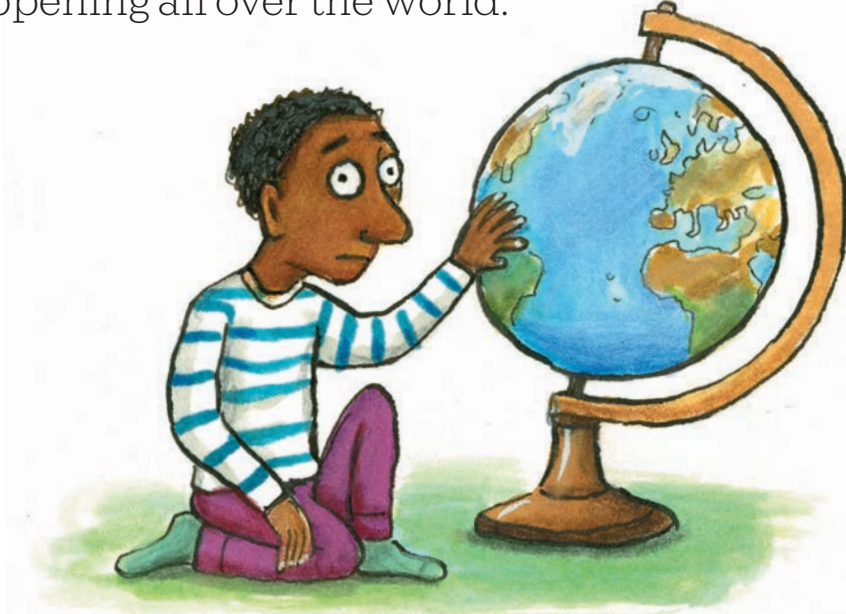
If you don't have a screen of your own, talk about how you can share screen time fairly with everyone who needs it.

Remember, grown-ups who live with you might have to do work at home as well. If they do, you can help them by not disturbing them when they are trying to work. Then they will be more likely to have time to do fun things with you. Maybe you could make a list of things that you would like to do with them.



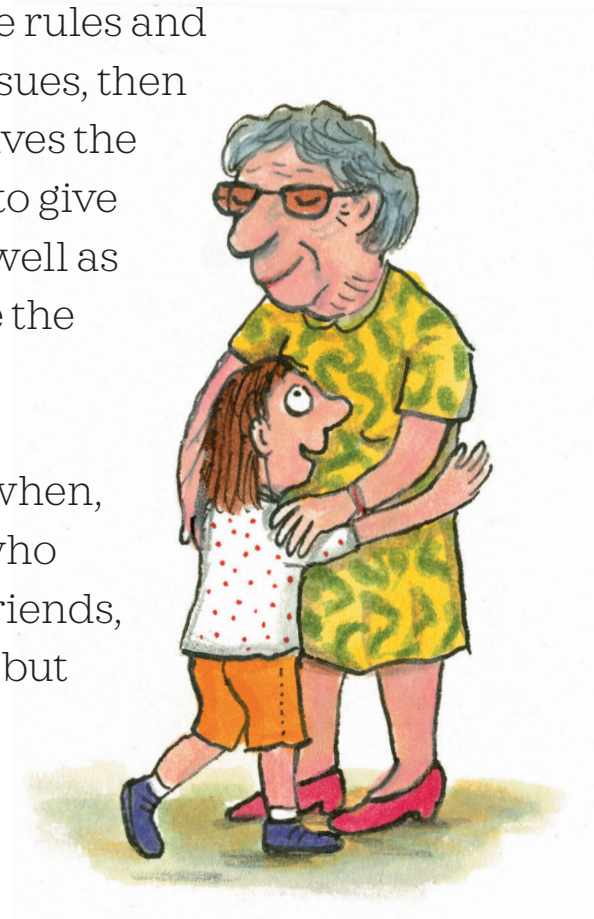
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT?

This is a strange time for everybody,
and it's happening all over the world.



But if we are all careful, and we follow the rules and remember to wash our hands and use tissues, then we can stop Covid spreading. And that gives the scientists, doctors and government time to give most people a vaccine against Covid, as well as discover more medicines that might cure the illness altogether.

One day, though nobody knows exactly when, you'll be able to visit everyone you love who doesn't live with you, play with all your friends, and do lots of other things that you enjoy but that you can't do right now.



**One day,
this strange time
will be over.**



**We did it
together!**



MORE INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN

If you want to learn more and keep up to date with news about Covid:

CBBC Newsround

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround>

If you feel worried or anxious, here are some links to places that can help:

Childline

A free helpline that you can call any time to talk about any worries you might have.

Telephone: 0800 1111

They also have more advice here:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus>

Young Minds

A charity that supports young people's mental health.

They have more advice on what to do if you are feeling anxious here:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

MORE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CARERS

British Psychological Society

Advice on talking to children about illness

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/advice-talking-children-about-illness>

Contact

Coronavirus information for parents of disabled children

<https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/covid-19/>

The National Autistic Society

Coronavirus resources for autistic people and families

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/coronavirus>

The Samaritans

Free 24-hour support helpline

Telephone: 116 123

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

Unicef

What you need to know about the virus to protect you and your family

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19>

HELPING THE NHS

Doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and all the other people who make up the health service in our country do an amazing job every day, but are working especially hard while people are getting ill with Covid. NHS Charities Together (registered charity 1186569), which supports NHS staff and volunteers caring for Covid patients, will receive £1 from every copy of this book sold. However, if you would like to donate some more money to help them, you can do so here:

<https://www.nhscharitiestogether.co.uk/>

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

Nosy Crow is an award-winning, small, independent children's book publisher. We made this book because we felt that children and parents might find it useful. We publish lots of different kinds of books for children aged 0-12. You can find out about us here:

www.nosycrow.com

We originally published this book in a smaller 24-page format in July 2020. Now the vaccine programme has begun, variants have begun to emerge, and the impact on children's emotional wellbeing is becoming clearer, we wanted to ensure this remained a useful and relevant resource for children and families, so we have published this fully updated 2021 edition of the book with extra content, in a bigger 32-page format. Despite the increased printing costs, our aim is still to keep the price of this book as low as possible, so that as many people as possible can buy it. From every £5.99 that is paid for a copy of this book, NHS Charities Together (registered charity 1186569) will receive £1. We hope that the remaining £4.99 will enable more bookshops to be able to afford to stock the book and will cover Nosy Crow's costs: it is not Nosy Crow's aim to make any profit from this title.

OTHER LANGUAGES

An earlier version of this book is now available digitally in over 60 other languages, produced by many other publishers around the world. You can find a full list of them here:

<https://nosycrow.com/coronavirus-languages>





Nosy Crow made this book quickly, to meet the needs of children and their families. No one involved was paid anything for their work.

We would like to thank the following people for their generous and knowledgeable input:

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