



Instructions: Read the passage below and answer the questions on the next page.

A pandemic

Viruses are strange things. We understand very little about them. Diseases caused by viruses are therefore hard to treat.

Another thing that makes diseases caused by viruses hard to treat, is that they mutate so frequently. When a virus multiplies, the new viruses formed can behave in ways quite different to the original virus. It's almost like the new virus has superpowers. The new virus is called a 'mutant' virus.

COVID-19 is a mutant virus. This virus originally lived on animals and caused diseases in animals. But recently, they mutated and have now developed the ability to cause disease in human beings. This is why doctors don't know how to treat this disease. It's very new and we still don't have medicines for it.

Scientists are racing to find out a vaccination for the virus. They are also trying to find out how to treat someone that might have caught the virus. Remember that you might catch the virus, but not show any symptoms. However, people who are already ill or old, can catch the virus and develop serious symptoms.



Wash your hands well, because that can break the virus down and wash it away.

Cover your mouth when you talk, cough or sneeze. The virus will come out in your saliva droplets and it can infect others. The precautions that you take will keep you safe and will keep others around you safe as well.

Questions

1) Why is it hard to treat diseases caused by viruses?

2) What does 'mutate' mean?

3) Why is COVID 19 called a mutant virus?

4) What can you do to keep others safe from the virus?

5) Does the virus affect everyone in the same way?



Answers:

1) Diseases caused by viruses are hard to treat because we know so little about viruses. Viruses also mutate often, which makes it hard to understand them.

2) When a virus multiplies, the new viruses formed can behave in ways quite different to the original virus. It's almost like the new virus has superpowers. The new virus is called a 'mutant' virus.

3) Covid-19 is called a mutant virus because this virus originally lived on animals and caused diseases in animals. But recently, they mutated and have now developed the ability to cause disease in human beings.

4) Washing my hands and covering my mouth when I cough, sneeze or talk will keep others safe.

5) No. Some people can catch the virus and not show many symptoms. Others, especially people who are old or are already ill can catch the virus and develop serious symptoms.

Answer key:

Please remember that you need to reward your child's ability to reason and use language creatively. The above are only examples of answers. If your child has constructed an answer that is different to this but that is grammatical and sound in its reasoning, mark it as correct.

