

# national hellenic FREE PRESS

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## **We must all sit at the same table to keep the country on its feet**

Last Monday morning I found out that I had been infected with Covid-19, just like so many other people. I felt this collective uncertainty that has prevailed to my core. So far it's been an unpleasant experience, something like a bad flu. But one must be careful. I keep hearing about people who didn't take it seriously and found themselves in a very difficult situation.

I spend my time doing puzzles, reading books and doing work for the newspaper. I feel sorry that I cannot be with my parents at such a time and I know how anxious such news make them. I am thinking a lot about their

generation and how we need to protect them. I know they are stubborn and want to go out, do their own thing. They think they are invincible because they really have gone through a lot, but they are not – not this time.

We are discovering habits we had forgotten, friendships that matter more than anything else in all this panic. We remember how important it is to give and how our lives can be turned upside down in just a minute. It's not war, but it definitely reminds us of war.

At times like these, we draw courage from exemplary people we have presented in our newspaper over the years – self-made men, such as Health Ministry spokesman and professor of infectious diseases Sotiris Tsiodras, who fill us with confidence. He's a man of few but important words. Also from people in the public sector, such as doctors, nurses, those in uniform, and civil protection executives who do their job with selflessness, little money and in adverse conditions. We have always said that it is insane for senior officials of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff (GEETHA) to be paid 2,500 euros and key state functionaries even less.

I also see that the virus of divisive hysteria persists in our country. It will not work here, no matter how much some people try. The fact that the main opposition is backing the government in its fight to contain the new coronavirus fills us with optimism. Tough times lie ahead, after the two consecutive crises – migration and the new coronavirus. Let's leave the crazies and the hardliners of each side to shout and insult each other, to sling mud. They will never change and belong to a past from which they cannot escape. We will continue to say what we believe.

When Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis does his job well in managing the tension in the Evros border region or – so far – with the new coronavirus, we will write about it. When main opposition leader Alexis Tsipras rises to the occasion, we will do the same. We care about the future of this country and the fact that, at the end of the day, we will all have to sit around the same table to keep it on its feet. Here's wishing strength to all.

ALEXIS PAPAHELAS

## **Greek police use tear gas on migrants at Turkish border**



Clashes broke out on Greece's border with Turkey before dawn Wednesday, after about 500 migrants attempted to break down a border fence and enter Greece.

Greek police said they used tear gas to repel the push south of the Kastanies border crossing. They said Turkish authorities also fired tear gas at the Greek border. The clashes began at 2 a.m. and lasted for roughly two hours.



An estimated 2,000 migrants are still camped out on the Greek-Turkish border, weeks after Turkey declared its borders to Europe open and encouraged migrants and refugees living in the country to try crossing into European Union member Greece.

Tens of thousands of people headed to the frontier despite Greece's insistence that its eastern border, which is also the EU's external border, was shut. The move came after months of threats by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that he would allow millions of refugees into Europe unless the EU provided more support for refugee care in Turkey.

(Continued p.2)



## NATIONAL HELLENIC FREE PRESS

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### THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
- 2.To support the ideas of the Hellenic-Christian tradition
- 3.To promote the preservation of the Greek language
- 4.To encourage all worthy Community causes
- 5 To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

## Government to ban social gatherings, spokesman says



Government spokesman Stelios Petsas on Wednesday heralded new measures for the containment of the coronavirus outbreak, saying that authorities will be announcing a ban on social gatherings within the day.

Large public gatherings for events like concerts or sports games have already been banned since last week and the government has been pushing citizens to implement a strict self-containment policy since the weekend.

The new measure seeks to restrict citizens from getting together socially in groups to hang out in public spaces like parks or squares, or even for gatherings at home.

In comments to Alpha TV, Petsas said the cap will likely be set at 10 people but ruled out a general curfew restricting the citizens' movements in public, at least for the time being

**Highway traffic has dropped** considerably in the last few days as a result of the shuttering of schools and businesses and citizens choosing to stay at home to contain the spread of the coronavirus.



In the week to Wednesday, Attiki Odos, the Athens ring road, experienced a 40 per cent decline in traffic compared to the same time last year, while other highways around the country are reporting drops ranging from 13 to 24 percent.

A notable rise has also been recorded in contactless card payments at toll posts, with the Infrastructure Ministry considering banning cash transactions, despite the reaction by highway operating companies..

## Coronavirus cases rise to 418 with 31 new infections, Health Ministry says



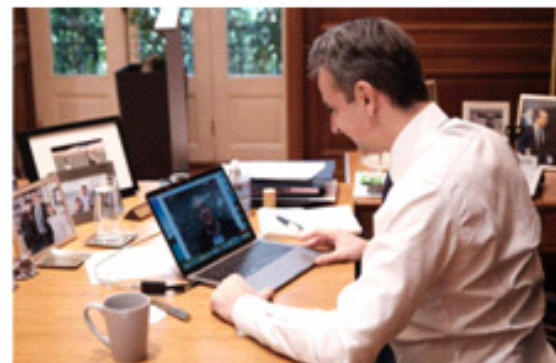
Greece's Health Ministry representative Sotiris Tsiodras on Wednesday (3/18/20) announced 31 new cases of coronavirus, bringing the total to 418, with the death toll remaining at five. Of those infected, 79 are being treated in hospital while 13 are in critical condition, Tsiodras said. The average age of those infected stands at around 70 years, the ministry representative added. In 64 of the cases, the source of infection has not been identified, indicating transmission in the community. Tsiodras underlined the importance of people observing instructions to avoid contact, particularly with large groups of people. "We must consider ourselves as if we are carriers of the virus. A positive or negative test does not change that strategy." Addressing the same press conference, Deputy Civil Protection Minister Nikos Hardalias confirmed a ban on gatherings of more than 10 people as part of ongoing efforts to curb the spread of the virus.

GEORGE N. TZOGOPOULOS

## Staying home cyber-safe

While the international community is fighting Covid-19, a new challenge is emerging: how to defend against potential cyberattacks. Politicians, including in Greece, find themselves having to replace their face-to-face meetings with phone or video calls.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and leader of the main opposition SYRIZA party Alexis Tsipras, for example, are certainly sending the correct message to citizens by not meeting in person. But it is questionable whether measures to guarantee the safety of online communications have been taken.



Recent reports about hackers targeting Greek government websites have exposed weaknesses. The alert should be higher now that the Covid-19 crisis has broken out and well-equipped offices are not being used. Intercepted talks might even pose a national threat in a period of tensions in Greek-Turkish relations.

It's not just about the online conversations of politicians and other high-level officials, including military ones though. Employees in the public and the private sectors are now expected to use their personal computers from home for business purposes for a long period of time. Their personal data can be accessed by cybercriminals who are experts in exploiting vulnerabilities. Interpol, for instance, has already warned about financial fraud during the pandemic. This is particularly worrying for bank employees.

Last but not least, ordinary citizens can easily fall victim to phishing emails or fake websites. Some hackers cultivate online illusions about supposed cures for Covid-19 and tax refunds. And others ask for donations by replicating the logos of international organizations such as the World Health Organization.

The governmental campaign "Staying Home" has already yielded results. It's now time to complement it in order to stay home cyber-safe.



# Greek police use tear gas on migrants at Turkish border

(From p.1)

The EU says it is adhering to a 2016 deal with Turkey under which it provides billions of euros in funds in return for Turkey caring for more than 3.5 million refugees from neighboring Syria.

On Wednesday, Turkey declared that it was closing down its six land and sea border crossings with Greece and Bulgaria in an effort to contain the spread of the new coronavirus. But a senior Turkish official said that the measure did not amount to an end of Ankara's policy of not preventing migrants from leaving Turkey.

The borders were sealed to people and not the transportation of goods, the official added, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with Turkish government protocol.

The violence on the border came hours after Erdogan held a four-way video conference with the leaders of France, Germany and Britain to discuss the migrants crisis.


A statement from Erdogan's office said the four leaders also discussed ways of resolving the Syria conflict and providing humanitarian aid in Syria's troubled Idlib province. It didn't immediately provide further details

Tuesday's teleconference between Erdogan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was arranged after the European leaders cancelled plans to travel to Istanbul due to the coronavirus crisis.

The violence at the Greek-Turkish border has added to concerns in Athens over the high number of migrants arrivals from Turkey — at a rough average of 100 per day on the Greek islands so far this year — adding to severe overcrowding at refugee camps there.

Greek authorities Wednesday imposed movement restrictions, lasting for at least one month, at the island camps as part of public safety measures for the coronavirus pandemic.

Migrants on Lesbos and four other islands will only be allowed to visit towns on the islands in small groups and for limited periods, the Migration Affairs Ministry said. The ministry said it was also speeding up plans to build detention facilities on the islands No infections have been confirmed at any of the camps, though the extent of testing at those sites remains unclear. More than 9,300 people have reached Greece — mostly arriving on the eastern islands — from Turkey so far this year, although the rate has slowed over the past week.




We, unfortunately, are obliged to postpone the Reception on the occasion of the National Day of Greece scheduled for March 19th, 2020, due to the Illinois Disaster Proclamation (protection measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus), as well as due to clear relevant instructions by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We hope for your understanding, as this measure is taken for our protection.

**The event is NOT canceled;** it will take place at a later stage, hopefully by the end of April 2020.

You will be informed of the new date of the reception in due time.

*Αναβάλλεται για αργότερα η Δεξίωση για την Εθνική Εορτή, η οποία θα γινόταν την Πέμπτη 19 Μαρτίου στο Union League Club of Chicago. Έχουμε λάβει επίσημη εντολή από το Υπουργείο Εξωτερικών να ακυρωθούν οι εκδηλώσεις για τον εορτασμό της 25ης Μαρτίου. Όταν αποφασιστεί η ημερομηνία που τελικώς θα γίνει η δεξίωση θα ενημερώσουμε με νέα πρόσκληση.*





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# Magnificent seven from US gearing up to invest in Greece

The list includes Chicago-based Verano, with which Fragogiannis discussed how the program of medical cannabis could be developed in Greece, as the US company appears determined to invest in this country.

Top officials from seven important US investment groups are preparing to visit Greece with the aim of developing business plans in their fields of activity in this country.

They comprise the first wave of investors following Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and other cabinet members' recent contacts in New York and Washington, which in turn came after US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross' visit to Athens and preparations by Deputy Foreign Minister Kostas Fragogiannis and Investment Minister Adonis Georgiadis.

At this stage, two investment entities in the real estate sector, a legal firm specializing in corporate restructuring, a funding corporation, a group investing in renewable energy sources, a major company in medical cannabis production and a group in the movie industry are set to arrive in Greece from the US with the intention of seeking out investment opportunities or promoting plans they have already drafted.

Renovo Financial, Cushman & Wakefield, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP and Granite Creek Capital Partners are eyeing the areas of real estate or financing and restructuring in Greece. Senior officials from the firms recently met with Fragogiannis in Chicago. While Cushman & Wakefield has long been present in Greece with consultancy projects such as the sale of the Porto Carras complex in Halkidiki, all four companies discern opportunities in the Greek property and corporate landscape.

Of particular significance is the intention of Invenergy to invest in Greece. Fragogiannis met in Chicago on February 21 with the company's founder and chief executive Michael Polsky and its board, with their next meeting to take place in Athens. Invenergy is one of the biggest private producers of electricity in North America and among the top six wind power producers in the US, and is targeting a series of investment opportunities in Greece.

The list also includes Chicago-based Verano, with which Fragogiannis discussed ways of developing Greece's medical cannabis program, as the US company appears determined to invest in this country.

The most mature investment plan of all is that of Cinespace. The US movie company is seeking the right location for it to set up production studios in Greece, with the aim of its clients, which include Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, Disney/Fox and Apple, making some of their productions in this country.



# UN says Greece has no right to stop accepting asylum request



The United Nation's refugee agency said on Monday that Greece had no right to stop accepting asylum applications as Athens struggled with a sudden increase of arrivals at its border of Middle East refugees and migrants from Turkey.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on Sunday his country would not be accepting any new asylum requests for a month after two days of clashes between border police and thousands of people seeking to enter the EU from Turkey. "It is important that the authorities refrain from any measures that might increase the suffering of vulnerable people," UNHCR said in a statement.

"All states have a right to control their borders and manage irregular movements, but at the same time should refrain from the use of excessive or disproportionate force and maintain systems for handling asylum requests in an orderly manner." The UN agency said neither international nor EU law provided "any legal basis for the suspension of the reception of asylum applications."

Its statement came as the EU scrambled to help Greece police the frontier and sought to put pressure on Turkey to go back to preventing refugees and migrants stranded on its territory from seeking to reach Europe. [Reuters]



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Greece seeks to fortify borders amid Erdogan threats



As Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned on Monday that soon the number of refugees crossing into Europe “will reach millions” unless the European Union takes responsibility for the crisis, Greece continued efforts to fortify its borders and diplomatic initiatives to tackle what it calls an “asymmetrical threat.”

On the diplomatic front, the government’s initiatives have led to a planned visit on Tuesday to the Greek-Turkish border in Evros by the presidents of the European Commission, Council and Parliament – Ursula von der Leyen, Charles Michel and David Sassoli – accompanied by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Even though Athens believes the visits send a powerful message, it is expecting practical support from its partners, stressing that Greece’s borders with Turkey are also European.

On Sunday, Greece announced emergency measures to tackle the crisis, including a further tightening of border controls to the maximum level, a temporary one-month suspension of asylum applications and the immediate return of undocumented migrants to their country of origin.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of refugees and migrants at the Greek border is estimated at around 13,000 people and tensions are rising as they try to push through.

Tensions were also running high on the islands following the arrival over the weekend of around 1,000 refugees and migrants, with locals trying to prevent one smuggling boat from docking.

A child died when one vessel capsized.

Meanwhile a military exercise with live ammunition was held in the Evros River border region by Greek army units on Monday, with the aim of sending out a message that Greece will not allow its national borders and security to be violated.

At the same time, EU border protection agency Frontex on Monday accepted Greece’s request for immediate assistance for the surveillance of the Evros border and the Eastern Aegean. Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri said the agency was withdrawing border guards participating in other operations so that they can be sent to Greece.

Senior Frontex officials told Kathimerini that border guards will arrive in Greece within the next five days, while technical assistance (boats, airplanes, vehicles, etc.) is expected in the next 10 days.

European officials, meanwhile, condemned Erdogan’s stance, with German Chancellor Angela Merkel saying that while she understands Turkey is facing a very big challenge in northwestern Syria, it is “wholly unacceptable” that instead of seeking a solution through dialogue with the EU, Erdogan is “taking it out on refugees.” Echoing similar sentiments, von der Leyen expressed sympathy with Turkey over its problems in Syria but noted that allowing refugees to amass at the Greek border “cannot be” the answer or the solution.

US President Donald Trump spoke on the telephone with Mitsotakis and reportedly acknowledged Greece’s right to implement its laws on its border.

NEWS FROM GREECE

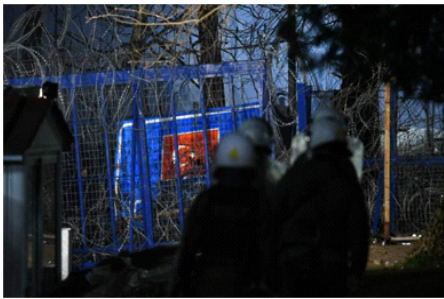
According to Turkey’s Anadolu Agency, US defense chief Mark Esper said what Turkey does on its Greek border regarding refugees and migrants is “its own decision to make.”

Greece keeping close tabs on Turkey’s moves

As Turkey persists in what is seen as a strategy of escalating tensions, Greece continues to closely monitor Ankara’s moves in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean and at the Evros land border, seeking to convey a strong message that there will be no letup in the defense of its sovereign rights and borders.

Already in the last 24 hours, after multiple waves of escalation by Turkey on land, in the sea and in the air, the Defense Ministry and the Hellenic National Defense General Staff (GEETHA) have issued instructions for Greek forces to adhere to the rules of engagement and withdrawal where necessary. The purpose is to ensure that the armed forces assist the work of the country’s police and border guards.

There has been constant tension at Evros, especially at the Kastanies-Pazarkule



border crossing, after a Greek border guard vehicle came under fire on Wednesday from the Turkish side of the border while on patrol and Turkish F-16s flew over Greek territory.

In the eastern Aegean, the Hellenic Navy units that had been initially deployed to intercept refugees and migrants from Turkey have now been moved to Chios, Lesbos, Samos, Kos and Symi, leaving the coast guard to deal with the task. The navy units will only intervene if necessary.

At the same time, the navy is also keeping close tabs on the large-scale Turkish exercise that began on Friday in the Aegean, from the north all the way down to Kastellorizo in the south. The exercise had not been included in those announced during the talks on confidence building measures between the two countries, and was only made known in the last 10 days. In addition, Turkey has reserved the entire area north of Crete for underwater exercises.

Greece suspends remaining flights to Italy as country records third Covid-19 death



The government decided on Saturday to suspend all remains flights to and from Italy after Greece reported the third death from the new coronavirus.

The two new victims were two men, aged 67 and 90, both with serious underlying health problems, the Health Ministry said.

There were 190 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Greece by late Friday.

In a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Saturday morning, it was also decided to increase checks on compliance with new measures to contain the spread of Covid-19.

The government will hire more staff for the National Public Health Organization’s 1135 information cen-

tre, as well as the national healthcare system.

On the last point, it was announced that 248 doctors and nurses have been hired, while another 929 are in the selection process and will be in hospitals next week.

Furthermore, a daily briefing on latest developments will be held as of Monday at 6 p.m. by the Health and Citizen Protection Ministries.

Greeks are ‘Nazis,’ ‘fascists,’ ‘barbarians’

As far as Recep Tayyip Erdogan is



concerned, it’s not just German Chancellor Angela Merkel who’s a Nazi; so is Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. And while French President Emmanuel Macron is “brain dead” and all Europeans are “fascists,” Greeks are “barbarians.” Once more, the Turkish president has gone too far, making vulgar accusations and comparisons to Nazi atrocities.

He had made similar accusations against Merkel when the German government banned pre-election rallies in favor of Erdogan for Turkey’s April 2017 referendum. He accused her and Martin Schulz of “Nazi tactics” again in September of that year over comments on Turkish-EU relations.

Speaking to his party’s parliamentary group on Wednesday, Erdogan showed photographs of the Greek-Turkish border and said that “there is no difference between what the Nazis did and what we’re seeing from the Greek border.” He went on to describe the Greek authorities as “fascists” and “barbarians.”

This is what the “democratic” Erdogan thinks. What is so outrageous is that such references are being made by the president of a country that continues to aspire to European Union membership while at the same time attempting to resurrect the Ottoman Empire.

Erdogan appears to have been thrown into a frenzy by recent developments: difficulties in Syria and Libya; being made a fool of by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who left him waiting outside the room where they were to meet in Moscow; picking fights with everyone instead of sticking to the “zero problems with neighbors” philosophy.

At the same time he is losing his grip on the domestic front and seeing erstwhile allies like Ahmet Davutoglu and Ali Babacan launching their own parties.

Yesterday he openly admitted that the Turkish Navy ships will “chase” Greek ones in the Aegean – a comment that came after a Hellenic Coast Guard boat was rammed by a Turkish vessel – and ordered his air force to fly over Evros.

Merkel and Macron, who recently thanked Greece for guarding “Europe’s borders” and are to meet with Erdogan in Istanbul in a few days for talks that will include the new migrant crisis, are being called on to deal with the Turkish president and his out-of-control ambition.

But how much tolerance can the West continue to show for an authoritarian leader who not only jails thousands of his citizens – including journalists – but also feels free to make disparaging references and comparisons that insult the memory of the victims of the Holocaust?

As the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece recently said, “The policy of the Turkish government to exploit innocent people and create impressions by trivializing the Holocaust for political purposes is nothing but an obscene and despicable operation of mis-

information and disorientation of the global public opinion.”

His comparisons of events on the border with the Holocaust also drew a terse response on Wednesday from the head of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris. Taking to Twitter, Harris wrote: “Turkish Pres. Erdogan accused Greece of doing ‘what the Nazis did,’ citing border crisis he created. Do migrants in Turkey face Holocaust? Are they fleeing for their lives? If so, Erdogan should be held accountable. If not, he should visit Auschwitz & learn about real Nazis.”

Intensified coast guard tactics bearing results

The first results of the Hellenic Coast Guard’s ongoing operation to secure Greek maritime borders in the eastern Aegean – compiled by the National Inte-



grated Maritime Surveillance System and seen by Kathimerini – show that from March 1 to 11 a total of 43 boats carrying 1,527 illegal migrants were intercepted by coast guard vessels, aided by navy and land forces.

The interceptions came on the heels of a decision by the Government Council for Foreign Affairs and Defense for more offensive tactics.

It envisioned patrols along the border and bold maneuvers to oblige the Turkish Coast Guard to return migrant boats back to Turkey’s coast.

During the same period, the coast guard carried out 17 search and rescue operations, recovering from the sea and transporting 445 refugees and migrants to Greek shores. In addition, another 1,309 migrants were tracked down after landing on the islands of the eastern Aegean.

E-supermarket struggle with demand surge



Online supermarkets are currently so inundated with orders that deliveries can take up to a week.

As e-supermarket visitor numbers were low – albeit growing – before the coronavirus epidemic hit, most didn’t have the necessary infrastructure to deal with a threefold increase in orders in just a few days. The demand for storage space and delivery vehicles has shot up.

After placing orders at the five major online supermarkets (AB, Mymarket, Kritikos Easy, Caremarket and e-fresh) on Friday, Kathimerini was able to confirm that the earliest delivery date within Attica was next Wednesday, March 18; this concerned three out of the five retailers, while for the other two the orders were not deliverable before March 20 – with time restrictions too.

Some supermarkets note that deliveries could take longer than usual because of the increased demand over recent days. However, they also stress the protective measures they and their delivery teams have introduced.

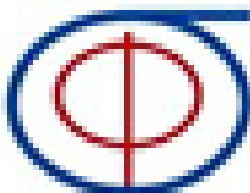
The decision by many consumers to switch to electronic retailers due to fears of contracting the virus at brick-and-mortar stores has resulted in online orders soaring. However, delivery is not available for most areas in the country, as some e-supermarkets are only active in the capital.



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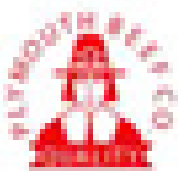


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## THESE FIVE THINGS CAN LEAD TO MEMORY LOSS



Once they hit a certain age, many people find they become more forgetful.

They may try to laugh off these memory lapses, labeling them “senior moments.” But the truth is, many people who start to forget things are frightened and assume these instances are signs of dementia or Alzheimer’s disease.

But there are numerous things that cause memory loss besides actual cognitive diseases, and this loss can occur at any age.

Here are 5 common things that can lead to memory loss.

### 1. Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is a common, treatable sleep disorder that causes a person to briefly (and frequently) stop breathing throughout the night. According to Constantine Lyketsos, MD, director of *the Memory and Alzheimer’s Treatment Center* at Johns Hopkins Medicine and professor and chair of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Bayview, sleep apnea can be linked to memory loss and dementia.

A study published in *The Journal of Neuroscience* found that sleep apnea negatively impacts spatial navigational memory. This type of memory includes remembering directions or where you put things like your car keys and cell phone. Science has found that deep sleep, also known as REM sleep, plays a crucial role in memory. When this sleep is affected, the result is memory loss.

If you frequently wake in the morning with a headache and feel fatigued in the afternoon, or if your partner complains of loud snoring coming from your side of the bed, you may have sleep apnea. Speak to your doctor about getting tested.

### 2. Medications

Several types of common medications can affect memory such as:

- sleeping pills
- antihistamines
- anti-anxiety medications
- antidepressants
- certain painkillers
- cholesterol-lowering medication
- diabetes medication

Memory loss could be a sign that your medication needs to be adjusted.

### 3. Nutritional Deficiency

Very few Americans get the proper nutrition required for optimal brain health. For instance, B12 is essential for normal nerve function and a deficiency can cause confusion and even dementia. Sources such as meat, fish and dairy products are rich in vitamin B12.

### 4. Stress, Anxiety, and Depression

Stress, anxiety and depression not only feel emotionally lousy, they are bad for our brain health. According to research published in the *Journal of Pharmacy & BioAllied Sciences*, untreated chronic stress can lead to depression, ultimately affecting brain function.

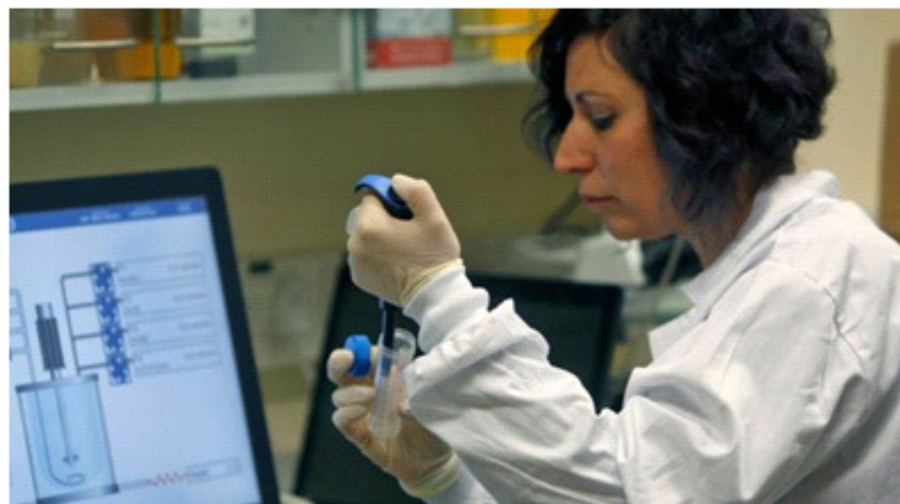
On top of the negative hormonal response brought on by stress, stress also causes people to have trouble sleeping, which can exacerbate problems.

### 5. Silent Stroke

Any changes in your ability to think or move normally can be a sign of a silent stroke. Even mild memory problems can occur after these strokes, which block the brain’s major blood vessels as well as smaller blood vessels.

The brain is very vulnerable to reduced or blocked blood flow, depriving it of oxygen and vital nutrients. A study published in the *journal Stroke* found that forgetfulness can be a warning sign of a stroke.

## Coronavirus: Where are we with a vaccine?



**Image caption** Researchers are developing vaccines and starting to test them on animals

As cases of coronavirus increase around the globe, the focus is turning to finding a vaccine. We've answered some of the big questions about vaccines and how soon one for coronavirus could be ready.

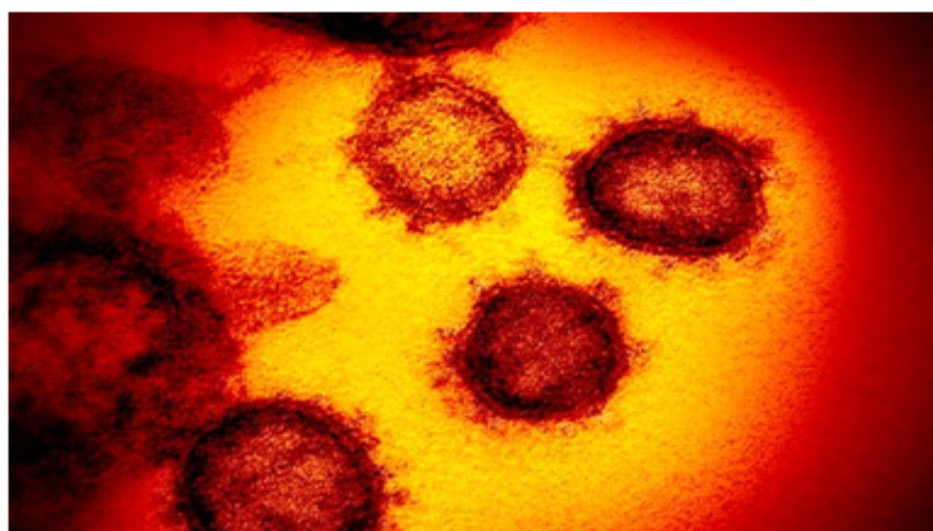
### How does a vaccine work?

Vaccines are like teachers - their pupil is the immune system and their lesson is how to fight infection. Vaccines harmlessly show viruses or bacteria (or even small parts of them) to the immune system. The body's defences recognise it as an invader and then learn how to fight it. Then if the body is ever exposed for real then it already knows how to fight the infection.

### What different types are there?

The main method of vaccination for decades has been to use the original virus.

So the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine is made by using weakened versions of those viruses that cannot cause a full-blown infection. The seasonal flu jab is made by taking the main strains of flu doing the rounds and completely disabling them.



The work on a new coronavirus vaccine is using newer, and less tested, approaches called "plug and play" vaccines. Because we know the genetic code of the new coronavirus, Sars-CoV-2, we now have the complete blueprint for building that virus.

Some vaccine scientists are lifting small sections of the coronavirus's genetic code and putting it into other, completely harmless, viruses. Now you can "infect" someone with the harmless bug and in theory give some immunity to the coronavirus. Other groups are using pieces of raw genetic code (either DNA or RNA depending on the approach) which once injected into the body should start producing bits of viral proteins which the immune system again can learn to fight.

### What's the progress so far on finding one for coronavirus?

Researchers have developed vaccines and are starting to test them on animals.

**Media caption** Inside the US laboratory developing a coronavirus vaccine If one is found, how quickly could it be made available? Realistically it is going to be mid-way through next year at best.

So there are vaccines being tested in animals, if that goes well there could be human trials later in the year. But even if scientists can celebrate having developed a vaccine before Christmas there is still the massive job of being able to mass-produce it.

All of this is happening on a unprecedented timescale and using new approaches to vaccines so there are no guarantees everything will go smoothly. Remember there are four coronaviruses that already circulate in human beings. They cause the common cold and we don't have vaccines for any of them. Would it protect people of all ages? It will, almost inevitably, be less successful in older people. This is not due to the vaccine itself, but aged immune systems do not respond as well to immunisation. We see this every year with the flu jab.

### Could there be any side effects?

All medicines, even paracetamol, have side-effects. But without clinical trials it is impossible to know what the side-effects of an experimental vaccine may be. Until a vaccine is developed, what treatments are available? Vaccines prevent infections and the best way of doing that at the moment is good hygiene.

If you are infected, then for most people it would be mild. There are some anti-viral drugs being used in clinical trials, but we cannot say for sure any of these work.