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## Understanding COVID-19 Topic for Virtual Oxford Science Cafe

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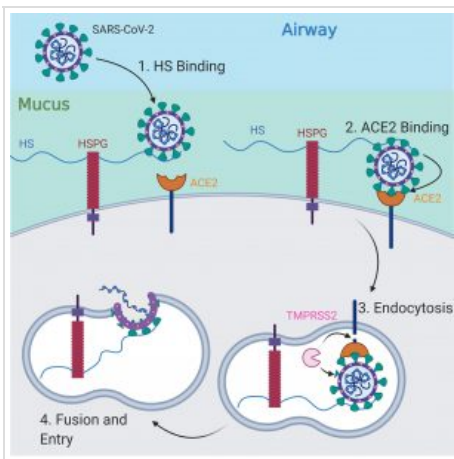
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## Understanding COVID-19 Topic for Virtual Oxford Science Cafe

**UM professor to discuss origins, infection processes of virus during Nov. 17 event on Zoom**

NOVEMBER 11, 2020 BY EDWIN B. SMITH



This illustration shows the path of COVID-19 as it enters and infects cells inside the human respiratory system. Submitted graphic

OXFORD, Miss. – The infection processes of the COVID-19 virus are the topic for a virtual Oxford Science Cafe scheduled for Nov. 17 by **University of Mississippi** faculty researchers.

The program will be hosted on Zoom beginning at 7 p.m. Joshua Sharp, associate professor of pharmacology and director of the **UM Glycoscience Center of Research Excellence**, will discuss “COVID-19 and Heparan Sulfate: The Carbohydrate Handle that SARS-CoV-2 Uses to Grab Your Cells.”

“An incredible effort from the scientific community has allowed us to learn a lot about the virus in a very short time,” Sharp said. “While there are many questions remaining about the disease, we have enough evidence to start answering some important questions.”

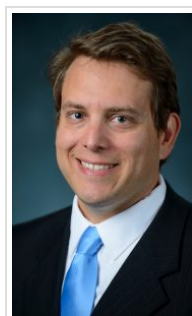
The topic is timely and should be of interest to a broad audience, said Lorena Magaña Zertuche, an Ole Miss graduate student in physics and astronomy and co-organizer of the event.

“The development of a vaccine and preventative medicine has been a priority for nations around the globe,” she said. “We are looking forward to learning the role that UM researchers play in this.”

Questions to be addressed during the 45-minute webcast include: Where do COVID-19 infections usually start in the body? How does SARS-CoV-2 find and enter target cells?

“We will discuss what we know – and think we know – about how COVID-19 infections get established,” Sharp said. “We will also discuss the discovery and initial development of intranasal heparin, a well-known anticoagulant injectable that is now in early clinical trials as an intranasal drug to prevent COVID-19.

“We will discuss how heparin works to prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection of cells, why it should be safe to administer intranasally, and why it might not be useful as a treatment of advanced COVID-19.”



Joshua Sharp

**Click here** to view the Science Cafe program. For more information about the Department of Physics and Astronomy, visit <https://physics.olemiss.edu/>.

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“James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier,” a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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