Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public: Mythbusters

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Advice for the public

Mythbusters

When and how to use masks

Videos

Advocacy

19 January 2022

How to report misinformation

- Alcohol
- Alcohol-based sanitizer
- Alcohol-based sanitizer, amount
- Alcohol-based sanitizer, religion
- Bleach
- Clean hands
- Cold weather, snow
- Dexamethasone
- Drugs
- Hand dryers
- Hand sanitizer
- Hand sanitizer, essential medicine
- Hand sanitizer, bottle
- Hot and humid climates
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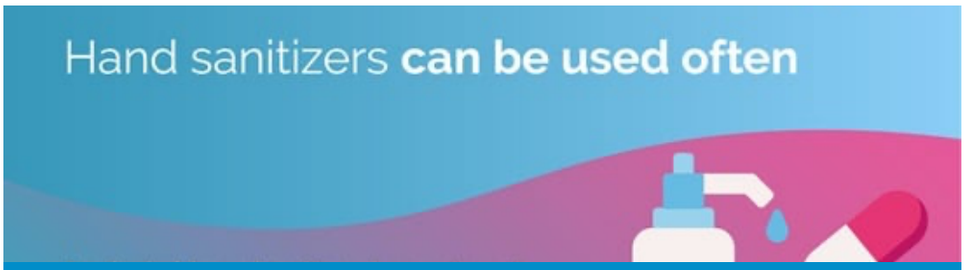
- Masks, CO2 intoxication
- Medicines
- Methanol, ethanol
- Misinformation
- Mosquitoes
- Older people, younger people
- Shoes
- Sunny and hot weather
- Supplements
- Swimming
- Viruses, bacteria, antibiotics

FACT: Hand sanitizers can be used often

An alcohol-based sanitizer does not create antibiotic resistance. Unlike other antiseptics and antibiotics, pathogens (harmful germs) do not seem to develop resistance to alcohol-based sanitizers.



Infographic

Hand sanitizers can be used often

FACT: Alcohol-based sanitizers are safe for everyone to use

Alcohols in the sanitizers have not been shown to create any relevant health issues. Little alcohol is absorbed into the skin, and most products contain an emollient to reduce skin dryness. Allergic contact dermatitis and bleaching of hand hair due to alcohol are very rare adverse effects. Accidental swallowing and intoxication have been described in rare cases.

Infographic

COVID-19: Alcohol-based sanitizers are safe for everyone to use

FACT: Alcohol-based sanitizers can be used in religions where alcohol is prohibited

Any manufactured substance developed to alleviate illness or contribute to better health is permitted by the Qur'an, including alcohol used as a medical agent.

Infographic

COVID-19: FACT: Alcohol-based sanitizers can be used in religions where alcohol is prohibited

FACT: The amount of alcohol-based sanitizer you use matters

Apply a palmful of alcohol-based sanitizer to cover all surfaces of your hands. Rub your hands together using the right technique until they are dry.

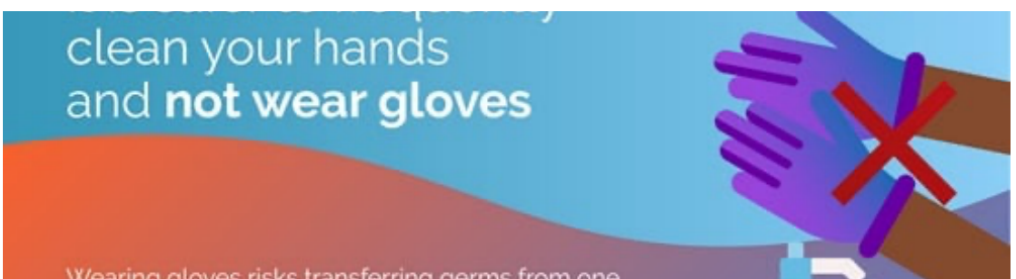
The entire procedure should last 20-30 seconds.

Infographic

COVID-19: The amount of alcohol-based sanitizer you use matters

FACT: It is safer to frequently clean your hands and not wear gloves

Wearing gloves risks transferring germs from one surface to another and contaminating your hands when removing them. Wearing gloves does not replace cleaning hands. Health workers wear gloves only for specific tasks.

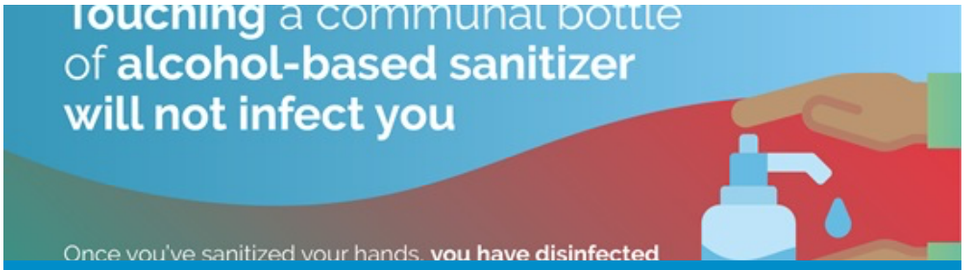


Infographic

It is safer to frequently clean your hands and not wear gloves

FACT: Touching a communal bottle of alcohol-based sanitizer will not infect you

Once you've sanitized your hands, you have disinfected them from any germs that may have been on the bottle. If everyone uses sanitizer in a public place such as a supermarket entrance, the risk of germs on communal items will be lower and will help keep everyone safe.



Infographic

COVID-19: Touching a communal bottle of alcohol-based sanitizer will not infect you

FACT: An alcohol-based handrub is listed as a WHO essential medicine

Clean hands protect patients, health workers, other caregivers and everyone from infection. Cleaning your hands is one of the key measures to prevent disease.

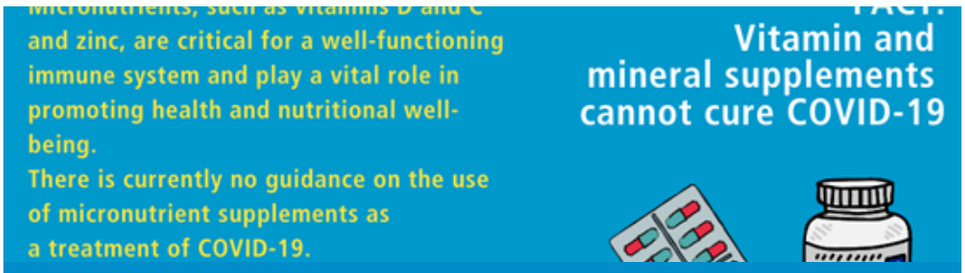
Infographic

COVID-19: An alcohol-based handrub is listed as a WHO essential medicine

FACT: Vitamin and mineral supplements cannot cure COVID-19

Micronutrients, such as vitamins D and C and zinc, are critical for a well-functioning immune system and play a vital role in promoting health and nutritional well-being. There is currently no guidance on the use of micronutrient supplements as a treatment of COVID-19.

WHO is coordinating efforts to develop and evaluate medicines to treat COVID-19.



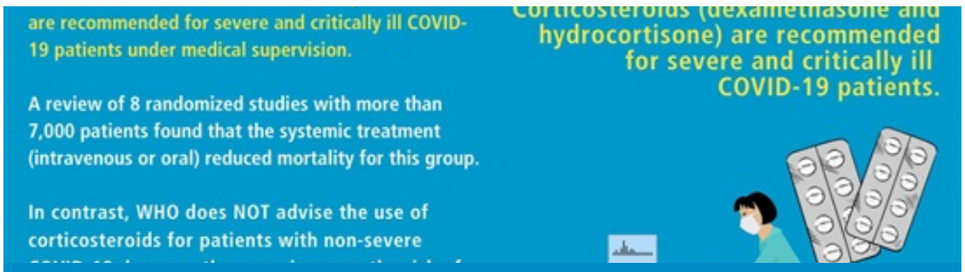
Infographic

COVID-19: Vitamin and mineral supplements cannot cure COVID-19

Is dexamethasone a treatment for all COVID-19 patients?

Dexamethasone should be reserved for patients who need it most. It should not be stockpiled.

It provided no improvement for patients with mild symptoms. Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid used for its anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive effects. For some COVID-19 patients on ventilators, a daily 6 mg dose of dexamethasone for 10 days improved their health



Infographic

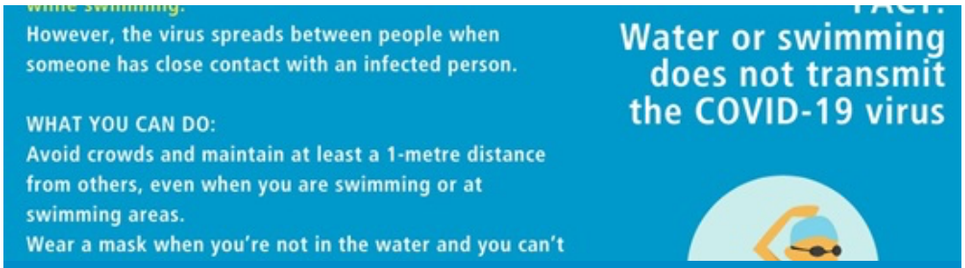
COVID-19: Corticosteroid are recommended for severe and critically ill COVID-19 patients

Fact: Water or swimming does not transmit the COVID-19 virus

The COVID-19 virus does not transmit through water while swimming. However, the virus spreads between people when someone has close contact with an infected person.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Avoid crowds and maintain at least a 1-metre distance from others, even when you are swimming or at swimming areas. Wear a mask when you're not in the water and you can't stay distant. Clean your hands frequently, cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue or bent elbow, and stay home if you're unwell.



Infographic

COVID-19: Water or swimming does not transmit the COVID-19 virus

FACT: The likelihood of shoes spreading COVID-19 is very low

The likelihood of COVID-19 being spread on shoes and infecting individuals is very low. As a precautionary measure, particularly in homes where infants and small children crawl or play on floors, consider leaving your shoes at the entrance of your home. This will help prevent contact with dirt or any waste that could be carried on the soles of shoes.

Infographic

COVID-19: Can shoes spread the COVID-19 virus?

3 August 2020

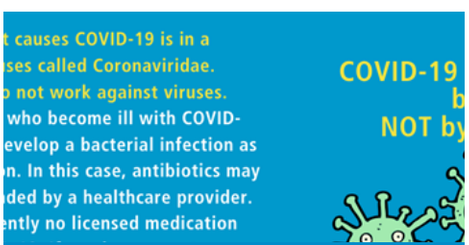
The likelihood of shoes spreading COVID-19 is very low

FACT: The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is caused by a virus, NOT by bacteria

The virus that causes COVID-19 is in a family of viruses called Coronaviridae. Antibiotics do not work against viruses.

Some people who become ill with COVID-19 can also develop a bacterial infection as a complication. In this case, antibiotics may be recommended by a health care provider.

There is currently no licensed medication to cure COVID-19. If you have symptoms, call your health care provider or COVID-19 hotline for assistance.



Infographic

COVID-19 is caused by a virus, not by bacteria

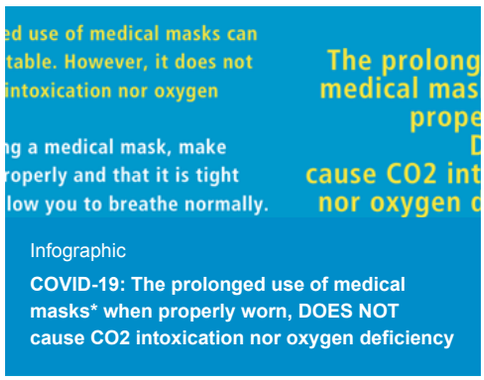
3 August 2020

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is caused by a virus, NOT by bacteria

FACT: The prolonged use of medical masks* when properly worn, DOES NOT cause CO2 intoxication nor oxygen deficiency

The prolonged use of medical masks can be uncomfortable. However, it does not lead to CO2 intoxication nor oxygen deficiency. While wearing a medical mask, make sure it fits properly and that it is tight enough to allow you to breathe normally. Do not re-use a disposable mask and always change it as soon as it gets damp.

* Medical masks (also known as surgical masks) are flat or pleated; they are affixed to the head with straps or have ear loops.



Infographic

COVID-19: The prolonged use of medical masks* when properly worn, DOES NOT cause CO2 intoxication nor oxygen deficiency

3 August 2020

Use of medical masks when properly worn DOESN'T cause CO2 intoxication nor oxygen deficiency

FACT: Drinking alcohol does not protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous

The harmful use of alcohol increases your risk of health problems.

Infographic

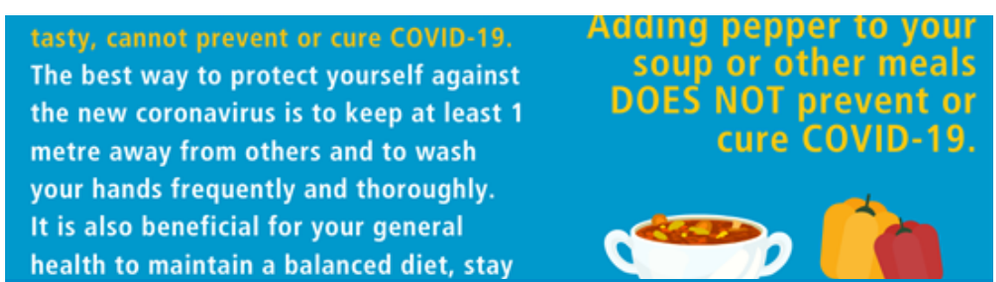
COVID-19: Drinking alcohol does not protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous

16 October 2020

WHO's Science in 5 on COVID-19 - Mythbusters - 16 October 2020

FACT: Adding pepper to your soup or other meals DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19

Hot peppers in your food, though very tasty, cannot prevent or cure COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself against the new coronavirus is to keep at least 1 metre away from others and to wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. It is also beneficial for your general health to maintain a balanced diet, stay well hydrated, exercise regularly and sleep well.



Infographic

COVID-19: Adding pepper to your soup or other meals DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19

FACT: Spraying and introducing bleach or another disinfectant into your body WILL NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous

Do not under any circumstance spray or introduce bleach or any other disinfectant into your body. These substances can be poisonous if ingested and cause irritation and damage to your skin and eyes.

Bleach and disinfectant should be used carefully to disinfect surfaces only. Remember to keep chlorine (bleach) and other disinfectants out of reach of children.

Infographic

COVID-19: Spraying and introducing bleach or another disinfectant into your body WILL NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous

3 July 2020

Coronavirus mythbusters: Spraying and introducing bleach into your body WON'T protect you

FACT: Drinking methanol, ethanol or bleach DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19 and can be extremely dangerous

Methanol, ethanol, and bleach are poisons. Drinking them can lead to disability and death. Methanol, ethanol, and bleach are sometimes used in cleaning products to kill the virus on surfaces – however you should never drink them. They will not kill the virus in your body and they will harm your internal organs.

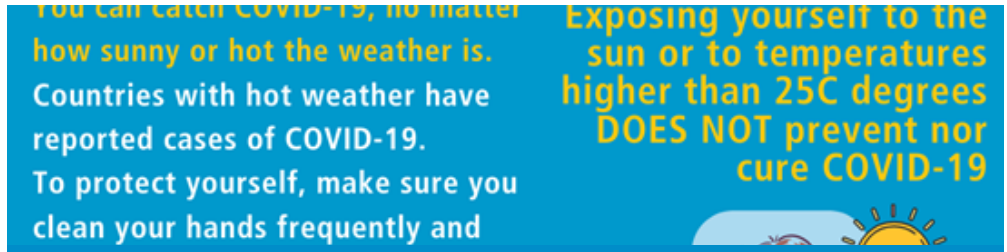
To protect yourself against COVID-19, disinfect objects and surfaces, especially the ones you touch regularly. You can use diluted bleach or alcohol for that. Make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.

Infographic

COVID-19: Drinking methanol, ethanol or bleach DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19 and can be extremely dangerous

FACT: Exposing yourself to the sun or temperatures higher than 25°C DOES NOT protect you from COVID-19

You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

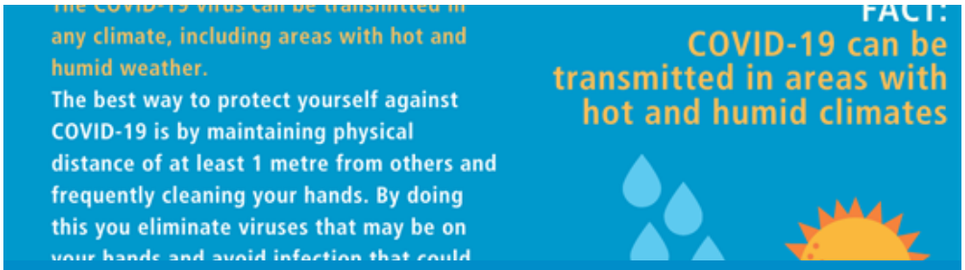


Infographic

COVID-19: Exposing yourself to the sun or temperatures higher than 25°C DOES NOT protect you from COVID-19

FACT: The COVID-19 virus can spread in hot and humid climates

The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by maintaining physical distance of at least 1 metre from others and frequently cleaning your hands. By doing this you eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

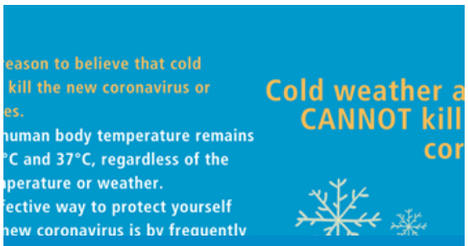


Infographic

The COVID-19 virus can spread in hot and humid climates

FACT: Cold weather and snow CANNOT kill the COVID-19 virus

There is no reason to believe that cold weather can kill the new coronavirus or other diseases. The normal human body temperature remains around 36.5°C to 37°C, regardless of the external temperature or weather.



Infographic

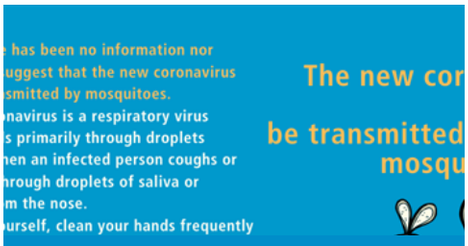
Cold weather and snow CANNOT kill the COVID-19 virus

9 September 2020

WHO's Science in 5 on COVID-19 - Myth busters - 9 September 2020

The COVID-19 virus CANNOT be spread through mosquito bites

To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes. The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.



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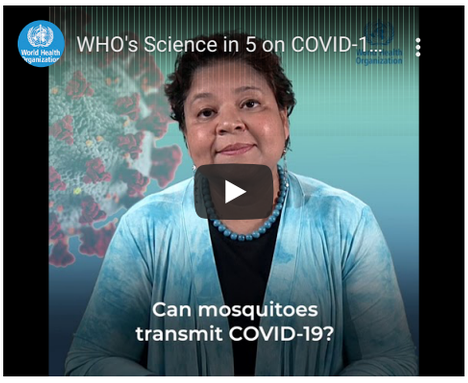

FACT: Hand dryers are NOT effective in killing the COVID-19 virus

Hand dryers are not effective in killing the COVID-19 virus. To protect yourself, frequently clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Once your hands are cleaned, you should dry them thoroughly by using paper towels or a warm air dryer.

Infographic

Hand dryers are NOT effective in killing the COVID-19 virus

FACT: People of all ages can be infected by the COVID-19 virus

Older people and younger people can be infected by the COVID-19 virus. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease are more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by following good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene.

Infographic

People of all ages can be infected by the COVID-19 virus

FACT: Antibiotics CANNOT prevent or treat COVID-19

Antibiotics work only against bacteria, not viruses.

COVID-19 is caused by a virus, and therefore antibiotics should not be used for prevention or treatment.

Some people who become ill with COVID-19 can also develop a bacterial infection as a complication. In this case, antibiotics may be recommended by a health care provider.

Infographic

Antibiotics CANNOT prevent or treat COVID-19

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