



Strategic partner in the Free State



# ELEVEN COVID-19 MYTHS - DEBUNKED

# MYTHS DEBUNKED

There's a lot of talk about the novel coronavirus 2019 and COVID-19, the disease it causes. Some of the information you hear is spot on, some is pure fiction. Misinformation can be dangerous. Here is a list of some common misconceptions and the facts about them.

Let's start with the most sensational myth about the origins of the new coronavirus.

**NO**, the COVID-19 virus was not made in a laboratory. It closely resembles other coronaviruses that originated from animal hosts. The fact is, COVID-19 presents mainly with mild symptoms, with only a small percentage of people experiencing severe symptoms that can lead to death.

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Here are some other facts to bust the many myths:

## MYTH 1:

**“The COVID-19 virus is just like the flu virus or no worse than the flu virus”**

The COVID-19 virus is a new virus that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses. This novel coronavirus has not been previously identified in humans, which means that humans have no prior immunity to this new strain. Influenza has been in existence for many years and humans may have developed some level of immunity against it. A vaccine for the prevention of flu is available while no vaccine exists to prevent the novel coronavirus.

The reported symptoms for COVID-19 are similar to those of influenza. These include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Both influenza virus and the novel coronavirus are spread through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

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## MYTH 2:

**“Getting a flu or pneumococcal vaccine gives protection against COVID-19”**

No, it does not. The yearly flu vaccination that is recommended at the beginning of our colder seasons, around March each year, work specifically to protect you against that year’s influenza virus strains. The pneumococcal vaccine is used to protect people at a high risk from developing bacterial pneumococcal infections ranging from ear and sinus infections, to pneumonia. There is currently no vaccine to prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

## MYTH 3:

**“The flu vaccination lowers immunity and makes you more susceptible to COVID-19”**

Having a flu vaccination does not lower your immunity, but rather strengthens it to protect you from a specific strain of the influenza virus.

The flu vaccination can, in a small number of cases, cause mild flu-like symptoms such as body ache, fever or fatigue for a couple of days. This is your body’s way of building up immunity against the strain of flu virus you’re being vaccinated against.

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## MYTH 4:

**“You’ll just know when you have COVID-19”**

This is not true. Early on COVID-19 may have no symptoms. The main symptoms include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Some other reported symptoms include dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and a runny nose. In severe cases, the disease can progress to pneumonia. Specific laboratory testing can confirm a suspected COVID-19 diagnosis.

## MYTH 5:

**“Only old people are at risk to contract or have severe ill health from COVID-19”**

According to the World Health Organization older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes) are at risk for severe disease but anyone, even young children, can become ill with COVID-19.

If the symptoms are mild, it does not mean it cannot be passed on to another person who may be more vulnerable. Be alert no matter your age to avoid getting and spreading the virus responsible for COVID-19.

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## MYTH 6:

**“A face mask will protect me from contracting COVID-19”**

Most face masks still let tiny particles through. Wearing a face mask does not ensure that you will not contract COVID-19. If you have no symptoms or are not in close contact with anyone with COVID-19, wearing a face mask is not necessary.

The World Health Organization recommends wearing a mask if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or if you are caring for someone with COVID-19. Even then, you have to carefully wash your hands, and follow the steps to place, remove and discard a face mask.

## MYTH 7:

**“Spraying my body with chlorine or alcohol and rinsing my nose with salt water can help”**

There is no clinical evidence that rinsing your nose with salt water can protect you from contracting any respiratory virus, including COVID-19. Avoid spraying alcohol or other strong chemicals on your body - it will do more harm than good, and will not kill off any virus particles inside your body.

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## MYTH 8:

**“Avoiding all human contact will mean I am not at risk to contract COVID-19”**

There are definite preventive steps you can take to minimise the risk of contracting COVID-19. Avoiding large groups of people or any specific people does not mean you will not contract COVID-19.

The virus that causes COVID-19 can survive on common surfaces such as plastics, ceramics, glass and stainless steel for three to four days. This is why disinfecting and cleaning all surfaces you touch regularly, is important.

## MYTH 9:

**“Be careful of your dog, cat or other house pets – they can carry the virus”**

There is no evidence that your house pets can get or transmit COVID-19. It is always a good idea to keep your hands clean after touching your pets. In the preventive recommendations from the World Health Organization, people are encouraged to avoid open markets with animals and wildlife or the surfaces these animals may have come in contact with.

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## MYTH 10:

**“Don’t touch mail or packages you get from an area affected by COVID-19”**

It is highly unlikely that you will contract COVID-19 by touching mail or packages that you receive from countries where COVID-19 is present.

## MYTH 11:

**“Winter is the season in which COVID-19 can spread the most”**

It is still too early to make any definitive conclusions about seasonal spread for COVID-19. Health experts will continue to monitor infection trends during the summer seasons.

It’s important to take preventive steps and make hand hygiene a part of every day, in every season for protection against COVID-19.



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Now that we have busted the myths, remember this: Not all people who cough, sneeze or have a runny nose have COVID-19. Washing your hands frequently, not touching your face and knowing the facts about COVID-19 are still your best defence against this disease.

