

22

Number of confirmed cases in Botswana

5023

Number of tests carried out, 2065 negative

0

Number of recoveries

1

Number of lives lost to an infection of COVID-19

# Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Advice for the Public: Myth Busters

Everyone is talking about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and there are a lot of rumors and myths about it; including claims that COVID-19 does not survive in hot and humid climates. So it's important to know what's true and what's not. Based on the facts provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), which is the leading authority on scientific and public health information on the new virus, we are providing this bulletin to help you better understand what's happening and cut through the confusion.



**“We’re not just fighting an epidemic; we’re fighting an infodemic. Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus and is just as dangerous. If we don’t tackle this, we are headed down a dark path that leads nowhere but division and disharmony”.**

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,  
WHO Director General

**In the words of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who leads the World Health Organization (WHO), we are fighting an 'infodemic'. Falsehoods are filling the airwaves. Wild conspiracy theories are infecting the Internet.**

Hatred is going viral, stigmatizing and vilifying people and groups. This online hatred creates pain and has also contributed to physical attacks being made on religious or ethnic groups.

One of the things that make this epidemic different from the past ones is the dominance of social media in today's world. In the pre internet era, information was curated by editorial gatekeepers and official government sources. With the prevalence of social media today, anything goes, and people will try to make sense by searching for answers through the internet. Some of the information gathered may be reliable, but a lot of it won't be. There are bad actors manipulating those platforms for economic gain or ideological purposes. People may retweet links without having looked closely at the site. Innocently conceived jokes, for example, a photograph of empty shelves in a local supermarket can trigger panic buying.

As the pandemic has worsened, politicians, faith leaders and other authority figures from around the world have touted unscientific methods to tackle its spread. Endorsements from influential men and women mean people are more likely to take false confidence from unscientific cures. At best these are unproven, at worst some may exacerbate the virus's spread. Harmful health advice and snake-oil solutions are proliferating, including claims that COVID-19 cannot survive exposure to high temperatures.

The world must unite against this 'infodemic' too. As the world fights COVID-19, we also need to fight the epidemic of harmful falsehoods and lies. In response, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has announced a new Communications Response initiative to spread facts and science, countering the scourge of misinformation – a poison putting more lives at risk. Click the image below to watch the video.

In addition, a team of WHO "mythbusters" are working with search and media companies like Facebook, Google, Pinterest, Tencent, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube and others to counter the spread of rumours, which include misinformation like that the virus cannot survive in the hot weather, that taking a high dose of chloroquine medication can protect you, and that consuming large quantities of ginger or alcohol can prevent the virus.

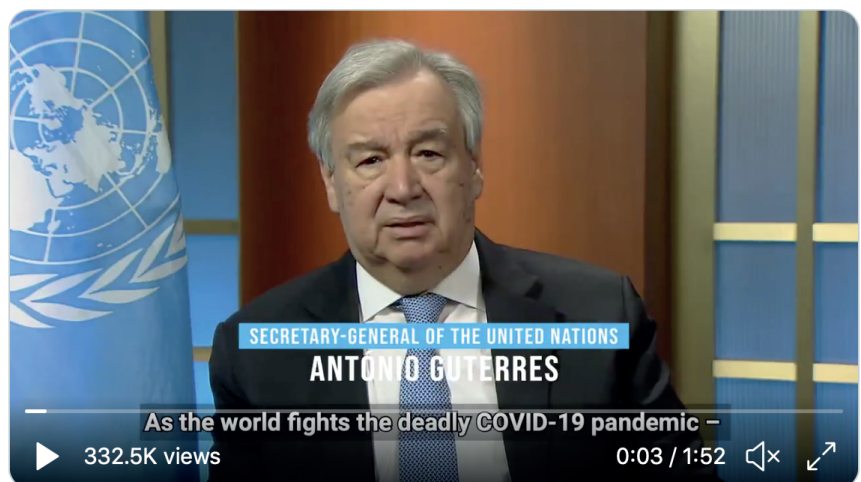
United Nations agencies also warn that besides the myths, there are a number of scams circulating online. Criminals have been taking advantage of the spread of the virus to steal money or sensitive information and, if anyone is contacted by a person or organization claiming to be from any UN organization, they should take steps to verify their authenticity.



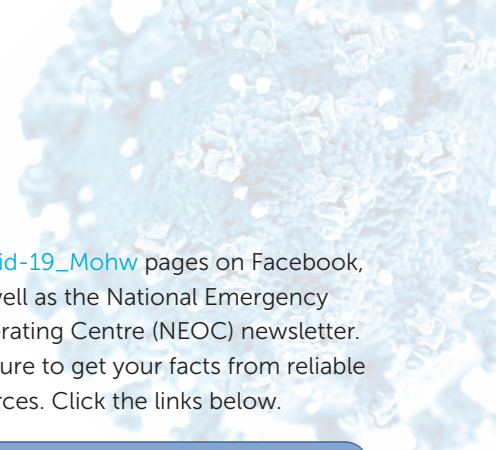
**António Guterres** ✓  
@antonioguterres

**As the world fights #COVID19, we are also fighting an epidemic of harmful falsehoods & lies.**

**I'm announcing a new @UN Communications Response initiative to spread facts & science, countering the scourge of misinformation - a poison putting more lives at risk.**



6:17 pm · 14 Apr 2020 · Twitter Media Studio



The best place to get reliable information is the WHO website, [www.who.int](http://www.who.int). Here you can find comprehensive advice, including more on how to minimise the risk of spreading, or catching COVID-19.

The site is currently being updated on a daily basis, so check in regularly. For more essential and factual local messages to eliminate fear and stigma around the disease, follow the [Botswana Government](#) and

[Covid-19\\_Mohw](#) pages on Facebook, as well as the National Emergency Operating Centre (NEOC) newsletter. Be sure to get your facts from reliable sources. Click the links below.

[BWgovernment](#) | [facebook](#)

[Covid-19\\_Mohw](#) | [facebook](#)

## How to spot if news is fake



### 1. CHECK THE CONTENT

A credible media outlet keeps one-sided opinions in op-eds, not in news articles.

### 2. CHECK THE OUTLET

Do you know it? Double check what other (trustworthy) sources say.

### 5. CHECK THE PICTURES

An online reverse image search on google can show if it has been used in a different context.

### 4. CHECK THE SOURCES

If the story uses anonymous (or no) sources, it could be fake.

### 3. CHECK THE AUTHOR

If the author has made up his or her name, the rest is also likely to be false.

### 6. THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE

The story could be a distortion. If an event is real, reliable media will cover it.

### 7. QUESTION YOUR BIASES

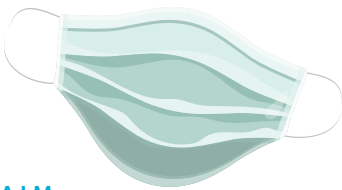
Sometimes a story is just too good or too scary to be true. Compare with reliable sources.

### 8. JOIN MYTH BUSTERS & FACT CHECKERS

Keep on top if the latest tricks used by those who spread disinformation.

If in doubt, don't forward WhatsApp message. Even if a message is shared many times, this doesn't make it true. Most messages are created with falsehoods and scams that are designed to be innocently spread by average users. We can break that viral transmission.

The WHO site includes a "myth-buster" section, debunking some unsubstantiated theories that have been circulating online. For example, it is a myth that cold weather can kill the virus, that taking a hot bath or eating garlic can prevent infection, or that mosquitos can spread the virus. There is no evidence for any of these claims. We are sharing some of the more popular myths below and debunking them.



#### CLAIM

### Face masks don't work

Wearing a face mask is certainly not an iron-clad guarantee that you won't get sick – viruses can also transmit through the eyes and tiny viral particles, known as aerosols, can penetrate masks.

However, masks are effective at capturing droplets, which is a main transmission route of coronavirus.

If you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with COVID-19. Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing. Masks are only effective if used properly and in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub. If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use and dispose of it properly. See more guidance at the WHO website - <https://bit.ly/2VwVc9s>

Doctors are recommending wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., in supermarkets and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. The use of simple cloth face coverings is advised to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.

*NB: Currently, there is insufficient scientific evidence for or against the use of any type of mask among healthy people in public settings. As new information and evidence about mask and non-medical mask emerges, WHO will update existing guidance.*

#### CLAIM

### Herd immunity would fully stop the spread of coronavirus

Herd immunity happens when so many people in a community become immune to an infectious disease that it stops the disease from spreading. Although most experts are encouraging the public to practice social distancing to "flatten the curve" – some people have disagreed with that tactic, saying that achieving herd immunity is the only thing that stops respiratory diseases like COVID-19 as enough people will have been exposed to the virus and achieved immunity to stop the spread of the virus. According to WHO, herd immunity only works if the majority of a population have been vaccinated against a condition. Unlike vaccination, herd immunity does not give a high level of individual protection, and so it is not a good alternative to getting vaccinated. The organization has added that while many people around the world have developed immunity to seasonal flu strains, the same cannot be said for the coronavirus. "Covid-19 is a new virus to which no one has immunity. That means more people are susceptible to infection, and some will suffer severe disease."

NB: If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.

If you develop 'cold/flu' symptoms, do the following: Call 3632273, 3632756 or 3632757 (07:30hrs – 22:00hrs) 997 after 22:00hrs - **STAY HOME. CONSULT WITH A DOCTOR OVER THE PHONE BEFORE GOING IN PERSON FOR CARE.**

#### Main Links:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

<https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/time-science-and-solidarity>

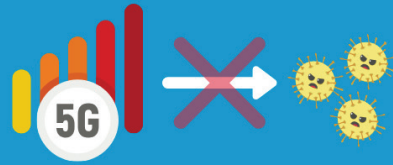
<https://factcheck.afp.com/>

<https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-check-facts>

>>  
5G mobile networks  
DO NOT spread  
COVID-19.

Viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks. COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose.

**FACT:**  
5G mobile networks  
DO NOT spread COVID-19



#Coronavirus #COVID19

8 April 2020

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are dry cough, tiredness and fever. Some people may develop more severe forms of the disease, such as pneumonia. The best way to confirm if you have the virus producing COVID-19 disease is with a laboratory test. You cannot confirm it with this breathing exercise, which can even be dangerous.

**FACT:**

Being able to hold your breath for 10 seconds or more without coughing or feeling discomfort DOES NOT mean you are free from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or any other lung disease.



#Coronavirus #COVID19

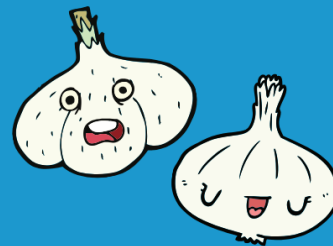
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Being able to hold your breath for 10 seconds or more without coughing or feeling discomfort DOES NOT mean you are free from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or any other lung disease.

>>  
There is no evidence  
to suggest eating  
garlic protects people  
from COVID-19.

Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Can eating garlic help prevent infection with the new coronavirus?



#2019nCoV

No. Spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body will not kill viruses that have already entered your body. Spraying such substances can be harmful to clothes or mucous membranes (i.e., eyes, mouth). Be aware that both alcohol and chlorine can be useful to disinfect surfaces, but they need to be used under appropriate recommendations.

Can spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body kill the new coronavirus?



#2019nCoV


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Spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body will not kill COVID-19.

Thermal scanners are effective in detecting people who have developed a fever (i.e. have a higher than normal body temperature) because of infection with the new coronavirus.

However, they cannot detect people who are infected but are not yet sick with fever. This is because it takes between 2 and 10 days before people who are infected become sick and develop a fever.

**How effective are thermal scanners in detecting people infected with the new coronavirus?**




World Health Organization #2019nCoV

«  
Can thermal scanners detect people with COVID-19?

»  
Drinking alcohol does not protect you against COVID-19

**Frequent or excessive alcohol consumption can increase your risk of health problems.**


**FACT:**  
Drinking alcohol DOES NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous



World Health Organization #Coronavirus #COVID19

From the evidence so far, the new coronavirus can be transmitted in ALL AREAS, including areas with hot and humid weather. Regardless of climate, adopt protective measures if you live in, or travel to an area reporting COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by frequently cleaning your hands. Eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

**FACT:**  
The new coronavirus can be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates



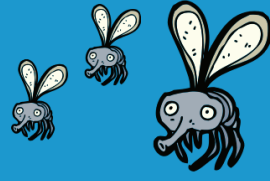
World Health Organization #Coronavirus #COVID19 9 March 2020

«  
COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates.

»  
COVID-19 CANNOT be transmitted 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. To protect yourself, clean your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Also, avoid close contact with anyone who is coughing and sneezing.

**FACT:**  
The new coronavirus CANNOT be transmitted through mosquito bites



World Health Organization #Coronavirus #COVID19