

COVID-19 | MYTHS BUSTED



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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our lives and our community, there continues to be myths perpetuated about the virus itself and distribution methods. History has also contributed to a lack of trust in research and scientific discovery. As a medical community, we must do better by providing equitable information and care to every individual across our community. We are dedicated to dispelling myths and providing the truth, so each individual can feel confident in their knowledge and personal decisions. Below are some of the myths that were brought to our attention, and the truth about what we know today.

MYTH: WE CAN'T TRUST COVID-19 VACCINES BECAUSE THEY WERE RUSHED

Developing the vaccines was a worldwide collaboration. Billions of dollars were invested in multiple companies and vaccine platforms at once to increase the likelihood of having at least one vaccine, if not multiple vaccines, developed, evaluated and produced.

Both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines have undergone extensive study and review with tens of thousands of immunizations already accomplished and all data suggest that the vaccines are not only safe but highly effective. This process involves gathering data about the effectiveness and potential effects of the vaccines that are reviewed by multiple federal agencies responsible for public health and safety. The vaccines have also been tested among a

broad range of ages, races, ethnicities, and people with pre-existing medical conditions. These safety approval boards include scientists and experts in infectious disease and vaccination that have no connection with the companies producing the vaccines. These individuals evaluate the safety based entirely on the data from the clinical trials. The safety standards for vaccines are even more strict than other medical interventions as these are given to potentially millions of healthy people. The speed of the COVID-19 vaccine development up to the approval stage underscores the advancement in scientific research and is based on decades of experience with production of vaccines for hundreds of other diseases. It does not indicate rushing of the regulatory checks and approval processes.

MYTH: THE VACCINE WILL GIVE ME COVID-19

The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain virus or virus particles. Thus, it is impossible to get COVID-19 from the vaccine. You will not be contagious or shed live virus after getting vaccinated.

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MYTH: NOW THAT WE HAVE THE VACCINE, THE PANDEMIC WILL BE OVER SOON

The companies that make these vaccines can only make so many at a time, so the vaccines are being distributed in phases, with priority given to people with greatest need. They won't be widely available to the general population until probably late spring.

Then, in order to achieve what's called herd immunity

– the point at which the disease is no longer likely to spread – about 70% of the population will need to have been vaccinated and the local positivity rate will need to be below 5%. For now, we should all continue to do our part to help slow the spread of the virus, including wearing a mask, washing our hands and physical distancing.

MYTH: THE COVID-19 VACCINE WILL IMPACT MY FERTILITY OR PREGNANCY

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are both mRNA vaccines that do not contain live virus. Because these vaccines are not composed of live virus, experts from the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) do not believe vaccination will cause an increased risk of infertility, first or second trimester

loss, stillbirth or congenital anomalies. Additionally, there is no reason to delay pregnancy attempts because of vaccination administration or to defer fertility treatments until the second dose has been administered. We recommended that you talk with your primary care provider or physician to learn more.

MYTH: ONCE I GET THE VACCINE, I WON'T HAVE TO WEAR A MASK OR WORRY ABOUT PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The vaccine trials were designed to prevent exposed individuals from getting sick, and they are very effective at that. We do not have enough public health data yet to determine if it prevents transmission. The vaccines work by teaching our immune system to recognize the virus and create antibodies to prevent infection. These antibodies act within our bodies. There also are antibodies that react in our nasal passage and respiratory tract and scientists are still studying whether the vaccines create those antibodies

as well so that the virus cannot be transmitted to others.

Given the limited information currently available, vaccinated persons should continue to follow all current guidance to protect themselves and others. This includes continuing to wear a mask around others, washing your hands and practicing physical distancing.

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MYTH: SINCE COVID-19'S SURVIVAL RATE IS SO HIGH, I DON'T NEED A VACCINE

While it's true that most people who get COVID-19 are able to recover, it's also true that some people develop severe complications. The disease can

damage the lungs, heart and brain, and may also cause other long-term health problems that experts are still working to understand.

MYTH: I ALREADY HAD COVID-19, SO I WON'T BENEFIT FROM THE VACCINE

According to the CDC website, there is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19

may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. The vaccines have been specifically designed to generate an effective immune response.

MYTH: YOU CAN CATCH THE CORONAVIRUS FROM EATING CHINESE FOOD

No, you cannot.

MYTH: COLD WEATHER AND HOT WEATHER CAN KILL COVID-19

You can get COVID-19 no matter how warm or cold the weather is.

MYTH: YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF BY GARGLING BLEACH

Disinfectants, bleach, and soap and water are used to clean surfaces and should never be swallowed or injected into the body. These products are extremely

toxic and deadly. Call 911 if this occurs. While hand sanitizers do contain alcohol, they are made to be safe for use on hands.

MYTH: YOU CAN CONTRACT THE CORONAVIRUS IN SWIMMING POOLS

There's no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread through pools. Proper operation, maintenance and disinfection of pools (with chlorine or bromine) should

remove or inactivate the virus. Still keep 6 feet of distance between yourself and others. Avoid public changing rooms if possible.

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MYTH: YOU SHOULD AVOID THE HOSPITAL IF YOU WANT TO STAY HEALTHY

Visiting a hospital or clinic can be quite nerve-racking, but know that if you are sick, hospitals and clinics are very safe places to visit. They are taking extraordinary measures to keep you and the

hospital staff safe. This includes proper hand hygiene, disinfecting surfaces, maintaining proper physical distancing among staff and patients, and wearing proper masks to prevent droplets from spreading.

MYTH: COVID-19 IS NO WORSE THAN THE SEASONAL FLU

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is different from the families of viruses that cause the common cold or season influenza.

- COVID-19 is 10 times more deadly than the flu.

- Infected individuals may not show symptoms for up to a week.
- The mortality rate of COVID-19 is at least 10 times that of the flu.
- 1 in 6 people with COVID-19 require hospitalization.

MYTH: HOME REMEDIES CAN CURE AND PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19

No home remedies can protect against COVID-19. The best approach is to wash your hands frequently, for 20 seconds at a time, to use an alcohol-based

hand sanitizer, to wear a mask in public, and to avoid crowded places.

MYTH: VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTS CAN PREVENT OR EVEN TREAT COVID-19

There is no proof that taking a vitamin D supplement can prevent or treat COVID-19. There simply isn't enough data, according to the National Institutes of Health and the World Health Organization.

MYTH: CLOTH MASKS DON'T PROTECT YOURSELF OR OTHERS FROM COVID-19

Cloth masks prevent the spread of coronavirus. We continue to learn about this virus and now know that cloth masks decrease the spread of infectious droplets.

- Do not move the cloth mask from your mouth and nose after you put it on.
- Do not touch the cloth mask, or your face, eyes, nose, and mouth while you are wearing it.

- Wash your hands before and after putting on a cloth mask.
- Wash your cloth mask often, especially after sneezing or coughing.
- Do not place a cloth mask on children under 2 years old or someone who has difficulty breathing or who can't remove it on their own.

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MYTH: I'M CURRENTLY TAKING AN ANTIBIOTIC, SO THIS MAY PREVENT OR TREAT COVID-19

Antibiotics treat bacteria, not viruses. COVID-19 is caused by a virus. Therefore, antibiotics should not be used for prevention or treatment. However, some

people who are hospitalized for COVID-19 may receive antibiotics because they have a different bacterial infection at the same time.

MYTH: THE FLU VACCINE CAN PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19

The flu vaccine does not prevent COVID-19, but flu vaccines help with the prevention and spread of influenza as well as reduce hospitalizations and the duration or severity of viral infections. People are

encouraged to get vaccinated every year. If more than 40% of Wisconsinites received the vaccine each year, communities would see less transmission and fewer serious complications.

MYTH: I WEAR A FACE MASK IN PUBLIC SO I DON'T NEED A FLU SHOT THIS YEAR

Wearing face masks, combined with other preventive measures, such as frequent hand-washing and social distancing, can help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Despite these efforts, it is more important than ever to get the influenza vaccine, also known as a flu shot.

If more people are vaccinated for the flu, fewer people will become sick with the flu and fewer patients will require hospitalization. When there are fewer flu cases, hospital resources are freed up for COVID-19 patients in the event of surges.

MYTH: THERE ARE NO LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF COVID-19

While it's true that most people who get COVID-19 are able to recover, it's also true that some people develop severe complications. The disease can

damage the lungs, heart and brain, and may also cause other long-term health problems that experts are still working to understand.

MYTH: COVID-19 IS AN INVENTED PANDEMIC TO COVER UP THE EFFECTS OF 5G RADIATION

COVID-19 is a real disease that has affected the lives of millions worldwide. There is no connection between the rollout of 5G technology and the COVID-19 pandemic.

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MYTH: THE COVID-19 VACCINE WILL ALTER MY DNA

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccine does not interact with DNA in any way. The vaccines work by training cells to make a protein that triggers the immune response.

They do not enter the cell's nucleus, where DNA is stored.

MYTH: THE OUTBREAK BEGAN BECAUSE PEOPLE ATE BAT SOUP

While scientists are confident that the virus started in animals, there is no evidence that soup was involved.

MYTH: YOU CAN CATCH THE CORONAVIRUS FROM URINE AND FECES

The virus that causes COVID-19 has been found in the feces of some patients diagnosed with COVID-19. However, it is unclear whether the virus found in feces

may be capable of causing COVID-19. There has not been any confirmed report of the virus spreading from feces to a person.

MYTH: PARCELS FROM CHINA CAN SPREAD THE CORONAVIRUS

Although the virus can survive for a short period on some surfaces, it is unlikely to be spread from domestic or international mail, products, or packaging.

MYTH: THE VIRUS ORIGINATED IN A LABORATORY IN CHINA

The novel (new) coronavirus first appeared in China. Epidemiologists did field investigations to find out how the new virus started. They conducted surveys in the community and in health facilities and collected nose and throat specimens for lab analyses. These

investigations showed them who was infected, when they became sick, and where they had been just before they got sick. Using this information, epidemiologists determined that the virus possibly came from an animal sold at a market.

MYTH: THE CORONAVIRUS IS THE DEADLIEST VIRUS KNOWN TO HUMANS

While COVID-19 is more dangerous than influenza viruses, it is not the deadliest virus that people have faced. Others, such as the Ebola virus, have higher mortality rates.

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MYTH: THERMAL SCANNERS CAN DIAGNOSE THE CORONAVIRUS

Thermal scanners can detect whether someone has a fever, which is a symptom of many different health issues, and is only one common symptom

of COVID-19. So, thermal cameras will miss infected people who do not have a fever yet or are currently showing no symptoms at all.

MYTH: YOU HAVE TO BE WITH SOMEONE FOR 10 MINUTES TO CATCH THE VIRUS

The longer a person is close to someone with the infection, the likelier the virus will be transmitted. However, the virus can pass from person to person in under 10 minutes.

MYTH: HAND DRYERS KILL THE CORONAVIRUS

Hand dryers do not kill the COVID-19 virus. The best way to protect yourself and others from the virus is to wash your hands with soap and water (or an

alcohol-based hand sanitizer) frequently for at least 20 seconds at a time.

MYTH: CATS AND DOGS SPREAD THE CORONAVIRUS

At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Based on the limited information available

to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low.

MYTH: CHILDREN CANNOT GET COVID-19

While fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 and can get sick from COVID-19. Also, children who have COVID-19 but have

no symptoms ("asymptomatic") can still spread the virus to others. Most children with COVID-19 have mild symptoms or have no symptoms at all. However, some children can get severely ill from COVID-19.

MYTH: ONLY OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH PREEXISTING CONDITIONS ARE AT RISK OF INFECTIONS AND COMPLICATIONS

People of any age can become infected with COVID-19. However, older adults and individuals with preexisting health conditions, such as diabetes, obesity, or asthma, are more likely to become severely

ill from it. While people under 40, including children, are less likely to become severely ill with COVID-19, the disease can lead to complications and death in anyone.

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MYTH: ORDERING OR BUYING PRODUCTS SHIPPED FROM OVERSEAS WILL MAKE A PERSON SICK

Although the virus can survive for a short period on some surfaces, it is unlikely to be spread from domestic or international mail, products, or packaging.

MYTH: THE NEW CORONAVIRUS WAS DELIBERATELY CREATED OR RELEASED BY PEOPLE

Scientists say the molecular structure of the COVID-19 virus rules out the possibility that the virus was created in a lab.

MYTH: YOU CAN GET A FACE MASK EXEMPTION CARD SO YOU DON'T NEED TO WEAR A MASK

Fake cards and flyers, claiming that the bearer is exempt from mask-wearing regulations, have shown up in some areas with official-looking logos or government insignias on them. They claim that the person carrying them has a physical or mental condition covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that makes them unable to wear a face mask or covering.

The United States Department of Justice has issued a statement about the mask exemptions, explaining that they are fake and fraudulent. The cards are not issued by the U.S. government and are not backed by the ADA.

MYTH: WEARING A MASK WILL INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF CARBON DIOXIDE I BREATHE AND WILL MAKE ME SICK

A cloth mask does not provide an airtight fit across the face. The CO₂ completely escapes into the air through and around the sides of the cloth mask when you breathe out or talk. CO₂ is small enough to easily

pass through any cloth mask material. In contrast, the virus that causes COVID-19 is much larger than CO₂, so it cannot pass as easily through a properly designed and properly worn cloth mask.

MYTH: IF YOU ARE EXPOSED TO A PERSON WHO HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19, YOU ONLY NEED TO QUARANTINE FOR SEVEN DAYS

The CDC recommends that you watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure. If you have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact your local public health authority or healthcare provider. Wear a mask,

stay at least 6 feet from others, wash your hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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MYTH: DRINKING WATER WILL FLUSH COVID-19 FROM MY SYSTEM

Drinking water is essential to keeping your body functioning properly and feeling healthy. You should keep drinking water to remain hydrated. However, drinking water does not prevent the virus from

entering your lungs and making you sick. The best use of water for COVID-19 prevention is using it to wash your hands.

MYTH: WE CAN ACHIEVE HERD IMMUNITY BY LETTING THE VIRUS SPREAD THROUGH THE POPULATION

Herd immunity occurs when a large portion of a community becomes immune to a disease, making the spread of disease from person to person unlikely. As a result, the whole community becomes protected — not just those who are immune. There are some significant problems with relying on community infection to create herd immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19. First, it isn't yet clear if infection

with the COVID-19 virus, or natural immunity, makes a person immune to future infection. If it does not create immunity, herd immunity will not work. Natural immunity is not as effective as immunity developed following vaccination. Also, the resulting human illness, suffering and death makes natural immunity impractical and unethical.

MYTH: THE NUMBER OF COVID-19 DEATHS IS MUCH LOWER, AND THE DISEASE IS OVERBLOWN

As of Jan. 23, 2.12 million people have died worldwide as a result of COVID-19. This includes 417,000 in the United States and nearly 6,200 in Wisconsin. While many of the people who died may

have had underlying health conditions like heart or lung conditions, the majority of those with these underlying conditions could have lived much longer if they hadn't contracted COVID-19.

MYTH: SPIKES IN COVID-19 CASES ARE BECAUSE OF INCREASED TESTING

The rise in infections is not related to increased testing but the increased percentage of people who tested positive. This increased percentage in positive

tests means virus is more quickly spreading in our communities.

MYTH: THE COVID-19 VACCINE IS JUST A WAY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TRACK US

There are no tracking devices in the COVID-19 vaccines. The complete list of ingredients for each vaccine can be found on the CDC's website.