

DEBUNKING COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) MYTHS

Chances are you've heard about a food, drug or other method that claims to prevent, treat or cure coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). But while it might be tempting to use a questionable product or method to stay healthy during the pandemic, it's extremely unlikely to work and might cause serious harm.

COVID-19 treatment and prevention myths

Currently, no cure is available for COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019). Researchers are testing a variety of treatments. But misinformation continues to circulate about ways to prevent infection with the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus or treat COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019).

Here's what the science says:

Pneumonia and flu vaccines. Vaccines against pneumonia, such as the pneumococcal vaccine, don't provide protection against the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus. The flu shot also won't protect you against the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus. However, annual flu vaccinations are recommended for everyone age 6 months and older.

Saline nasal wash. There is no evidence that rinsing your nose with saline protects against infection with the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus.

High temperatures. Exposure to the sun or to temperatures higher than 77 F (25 C) doesn't prevent the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus or cure COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019). You can get the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus in sunny, hot and humid weather. Taking a hot bath also can't prevent you from catching the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus. Your normal body temperature remains the same, regardless of the temperature of your bath or shower.

Low temperatures. Cold weather and snow also can't kill the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus.

Antibiotics. Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses. However, people hospitalized due to COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) might be given antibiotics because they also have developed a bacterial infection.

Alcohol and chlorine spray. Spraying alcohol or chlorine on your body won't kill viruses that have entered your body. These substances also can harm your eyes, mouth and clothes.

Drinking alcohol. Drinking alcohol doesn't protect you from the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus.

Garlic. There's no evidence that eating garlic protects against infection with the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus.

Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection lamp. Ultraviolet light can be used as a disinfectant on surfaces. But don't use a UV lamp to sterilize your hands or other areas of your body. UV radiation can cause skin irritation.

5G mobile networks. Avoiding exposure to or use of 5G networks doesn't prevent infection with the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus. Viruses can't travel on radio waves and mobile networks. The COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus is spreading in many countries that lack 5G mobile networks.

FOCUS ON FACTS

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been working to remove misleading products from store shelves and online marketplaces. In the meantime, remember that testimonials aren't a substitute for scientific evidence. Also, few diseases can be treated quickly, so beware of quick fixes. A miracle cure that claims to contain a secret ingredient is likely a hoax. If you have a question about a method for treating COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) or preventing infection with the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) virus, talk to your doctor. To ask a question about a COVID-19 medication, you can call your local pharmacist or the FDA (Food and Drug Administration)'s Division of Drug Information.