

Debunking COVID-19 myths

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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, says the Mayo Clinic.

COVID-19 treatment and prevention myths

While researchers are studying many COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, none has been fully tested for safety or effectiveness. Any claims that a medication, [herbal supplement](#) or other substance can prevent infection with the COVID-19 [virus](#) or cure COVID-19 are bogus. Likewise, misinformation continues to circulate about ways to treat COVID-19.

Here are some of the substances and products that have been touted as ways to prevent infection with the COVID-19 virus or treat COVID-19—and what the science says:

- **Pneumonia and flu vaccines.** There is currently no vaccine to prevent the COVID-19 virus. Vaccines against

pneumonia, such as the pneumococcal vaccine, don't provide protection against the COVID-19 virus. The flu shot also won't protect you against the COVID-19 virus.

- **Saline nasal wash.** There is no evidence that rinsing your nose with saline protects against infection with the COVID-19 virus.
- **High temperatures.** Exposure to the sun or to temperatures higher than 77 F (25 C) doesn't prevent the COVID-19 virus or cure COVID-19. You can get the COVID-19 virus in sunny, hot and humid weather. Taking a hot bath also can't prevent you from catching the COVID-19 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 virus.
- **Antibiotics.** Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses. However, people hospitalized due to COVID-19 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 virus.
- **Garlic.** There's no evidence that eating garlic protects against infection with the COVID-19 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 virus. Viruses can't travel on radio waves and mobile networks. The COVID-19 virus is spreading in many countries that lack 5G mobile

networks.

- **Disinfectants.** When applied to surfaces, disinfectants can help kill germs such as the COVID-19 virus. However, don't use disinfectants on your body, inject them into your body or swallow them. Disinfectants can irritate the skin and be toxic if swallowed or injected into the body.
- **Supplements.** Many people take vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, green tea or echinacea to boost their immune systems. While these supplements might affect your immune function, research hasn't shown that they can prevent you from getting sick. The supplement colloidal silver, which has been marketed as a COVID-19 treatment, isn't considered safe or effective for treating any disease.

Focus on facts

In the U.S., the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 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 or preventing infection with the COVID-19 virus, talk to your doctor. To ask a question about a COVID-19 medication, you can call your local pharmacist or the FDA's Division of Drug Information.

Effective COVID-19 prevention tips

There are steps you can take reduce your risk of infection. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend following these precautions for avoiding COVID-19:

- Avoid large events and mass gatherings.
- Avoid close contact (within about 6 feet, or 2 meters) with anyone who is sick or has symptoms.

- Stay home as much as possible and keep distance between yourself and others (within about 6 feet, or 2 meters) if COVID-19 is spreading in your community, especially if you have a higher risk of serious illness. Keep in mind some people may have COVID-19 and spread it to others, even if they don't have symptoms or don't know they have COVID-19.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your face with a cloth face covering in [public spaces](#), such as the [grocery store](#), where it's difficult to avoid close contact with others, especially if you're in an area with ongoing community spread. Only use nonmedical cloth masks—surgical masks and N95 respirators should be reserved for health care providers.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw away the used tissue and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid sharing dishes, glasses, bedding and other household items if you're sick.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily.
- Stay home from work, school and public areas if you're sick, unless you're going to get medical care. Avoid taking public transportation if you're sick.
- Before traveling, check the CDC and WHO websites to look for health advisories that may be in place.

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