



# FACTSHEET: ADDRESSING COVID19 MYTHS

## INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that first emerged in late 2019 and quickly became a pandemic, spreading rapidly worldwide. As of the 27th of April 2023, the World Health Organization reported nearly 2.8 million new cases and over 16,000 deaths globally in the last 28 days, which marks a decrease of 23% and 36%, respectively, compared to the previous 28 days<sup>1</sup>. However, despite this decline, some regions and countries report increased cases and deaths. The African Region reported over 5,500 new cases, representing a 68% decrease compared to the previous 28-day period. While 20% of the 50 countries for which data are available reported increases in new cases of 20% or greater, the highest proportional increases were observed in Chad, Mayotte, and Cabo Verde. Mauritius, Zambia, and Ethiopia reported the highest numbers of new cases, while Zimbabwe, Sao Tome and Principe, and Cameroon reported the highest numbers of recent deaths. Access to COVID-19 vaccines and accelerating vaccine delivery are crucial in saving lives and preventing serious illness. However, misinformation about COVID-19 continues circulating in some communities, making distinguishing between facts and myths about the disease essential. This fact sheet aims to distinguish between facts and myths surrounding the COVID-19.

### Facts about COVID-19:

- COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that spreads mainly through respiratory droplets when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes.
- COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The disease can lead to pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), and death in severe cases condition.
- COVID-19 can affect people of all ages, but older adults and people with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease are at higher risk of severe illness and death.
- There is currently no specific treatment for COVID-19, but supportive care can help manage symptoms and complications.
- Vaccines (Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Moderna, Oxford/AstraZeneca etc.)<sup>1</sup> have been developed and authorised for emergency use against COVID-19. Vaccination is an effective way to prevent severe illness, hospitalisation, and death from COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

**The best way to prevent the spread and slowdown of COVID-19 is to do the following as prescribed by the World Health Organisation (WHO)<sup>3</sup>.**

- Get vaccinated when a vaccine is available to you at any local vaccination site.
- Stay at least 1 meter apart from others, even if they do not appear sick, and wear a properly fitted mask when physical distancing is impossible.
- When in poorly ventilated settings, choose open, well-ventilated spaces over closed ones.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap, water, or alcohol-based hand rub sanitiser.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- When you feel unwell, stay home and self-isolate until you recover.

## MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT COVID-19<sup>4</sup>:

MYTH	FACT
<b>COVID-19 is just like a flu.</b>	COVID-19 is more contagious and deadly than a flu. While both diseases share the same symptoms, COVID-19 is caused by a novel coronavirus with no existing immunity in the population.
<b>Face masks are not effective against COVID-19.</b>	Face masks are an effective tool in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The World Health Organization recommends wearing a mask in public places where physical distancing is impossible.
<b>COVID-19 only affects older adults</b>	While older adults are at higher risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, the disease can affect people of all ages, including children.
<b>You can catch COVID-19 from pets.</b>	There is no evidence that pets can spread COVID-19 to humans. However, pets can contract the virus from humans.
<b>The vaccine is a tracking device. "Some believe that if you put a coin over the area where you were vaccinated, you will see that there is something like a tracker; you will see a big spot."</b>	The COVID-19 vaccine does not contain a tracking device. It comprises genetic material or proteins from the virus that trigger an immune response to protect against it.
<b>Vaccine is a population reduction device</b>	The COVID-19 vaccine is not a population reduction device. Vaccines are developed to prevent and control diseases, not to harm or reduce the population.
<b>You will die from side effects after vaccination in two to three years.</b>	There is no scientific evidence to suggest that the COVID-19 vaccines will cause side effects that lead to death in two to three years after receiving them. Clinical trials have shown that vaccines are safe and effective in preventing COVID-19.
<b>Vaccine alters DNA.</b>	The COVID-19 vaccine does not alter DNA. It works by helping cells to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19 without affecting DNA.

<p><b>Vaccine causes other variants of COVID-19.</b></p>	<p>The COVID-19 vaccine does not cause other variants of COVID-19. Variants of the virus develop over time due to natural mutations, and vaccines are designed to protect against these variants.</p>
<p><b>Receiving the COVID-19 vaccine can make you 'magnetic.'</b></p>	<p>No scientific evidence supports the claim that the COVID-19 vaccine can make you 'magnetic.'</p>
<p><b>Vaccines can make you sick with COVID-19</b></p>	<p>The COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19. The vaccine stimulates an immune response that can help protect against the virus but cannot cause COVID-19.</p>
<p><b>Only adults with pre-existing conditions are at risk of COVID-19 infection and complications.</b></p>	<p>People of all ages, including children, can be at risk of COVID-19 infection and complications. While older adults and people with pre-existing medical conditions are at higher risk, anyone can become seriously ill or die from the virus.</p>
<p><b>Community members said COVID-19 is not real it's just like flu.</b></p>	<p>COVID-19 is real. COVID-19 is more contagious and deadly than the flu. It is an actual virus that has caused a global pandemic, and it is not a hoax or the ordinary flu. SARS-CoV-2 virus causes it and can cause serious illness, hospitalisation, and death.</p>

[https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-vaccines](https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccines)

<sup>2</sup> <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2022/03/covid-19-vaccines-prior-infection.html>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_2](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_2)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

## References

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html> Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): The CDC is a leading public health agency in the United States and provides comprehensive information about COVID-19, including guidance on prevention, symptoms, and treatment.
2. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters> World Health Organization (WHO): The WHO is a specialised agency of the United Nations and provides global leadership in offers health. Their website includes up-to-date information about COVID-19, including the latest scientific findings and guidance on prevention and control measures.

