

Information from the Safety Unit | May 2020

COVID-19

MYTHS VS FACTS

1 Myth:

The new Corona virus was spread maliciously as a result of the Chinese government attempts to slow down the population growth and as a biological weapon. The virus was first detected in Wuhan, in which one of the Chinese biological institutes that keeps the virus is located.

✓ Fact:

Viruses that underwent genetic manipulation by humans can be identified relatively easily. No sequences or protein signs that might show any human manipulation were detected. The virus was transmitted to humans by animals through a natural selection process.

2 Myth :

Products that arrive in Israel from abroad can contain the virus.

✓ Fact:

It is not reasonable to assume that the virus can survive on surfaces for such long periods, especially due to extreme temperature changes the packages experience during flights. There is no evidence of contamination as a result of exposure to packages that arrived from different parts of the world, including China.

3 Myth:

This is merely "a flu with highly popular public relations".

✓ Fact:

Numerous persons affected by COVID-19 will experience symptoms very similar to those of seasonal flu but the general profile of the disease, including the death rate, is far more severe. COVID-19 pneumonia does not react as expected to high oxygen pressures administered during treatment at the hospital and causes widespread pulmonary damage. Its clinical manifestation is very different from that of seasonal flu, with a much longer incubation time and sudden deterioration after one week of mild symptoms. The death rate is currently evaluated as 1% - 10 times more than the seasonal flu.

4 Myth:

Strengthening the immune system by taking Vitamin C, zinc or any other supplement which aims to boost the immune system can reduce the risk of catching the Corona virus.

✓ Fact:

There is no current significant statistical evidence that Vitamin C, zinc, or any other supplement assists in reducing the risk of being infected with the Corona virus. This is unfounded hearsay not supported by medical research.

5 Myth:

Repetitive irrigations of the nose using a saline solution and/or drinking hot beverages and/ or gargling vinegar/ alcohol occupy the mucosal membranes of the upper respiratory system, thus preventing infection.

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✓ Fact

There is no evidence that repetitive nose irrigations using saline prevents infection with the Corona virus. Some evidence state that these irrigations can assist in recovering more quickly from the flu but it was not proved to prevent respiratory infection. As for drinking and/ or gargling hot beverages – when the virus is inhaled, it enters the respiratory track and travels to other cells. It almost never passes through the mouth. After it penetrates the cells, no quantity of liquid at any temperature can wash the virus out of the body. Tea, vinegar or saline solution cannot affect the virus. As for drinking alcohol – a dangerous and unfounded hearsay.

6 Myth:

Eating garlic and onion is efficient against the Corona virus.

✓ Fact

The decomposition products of organic compounds found in garlic are efficient against yeast and bacteria. Onion was not found efficient in the treatment against bacteria or yeast. There is no proof that eating decomposition products of garlic and/ or onion is efficient against any virus, including Corona virus.

7 Myth:

Spraying alcohol or bleach on the body or on clothes prevents infection with the Corona virus.

✓ Fact

If the virus has already penetrated the body, no quantity of alcohol or bleach can help. Spraying bleach on the clothes will alter their color and weaken the fabric. Spraying ethanol on the body can damage the mucosal membranes of the eyes and mouth. These products should only be used for surfaces disinfection. It is known that the virus can stay on various surfaces and at various temperatures but it must be taken into account that this information was collected under controlled conditions in the lab and that infection occurs when the exposure viral load is significant – a situation not probable for exposure to transient products or surfaces. Keeping a strict hand hygiene reduces the risk of exposure to the virus.

8 Myth:

It is advisable to spray everything with 95% alcohol to be sure that the virus is destroyed.

✓ Fact

Not true. Use a solution of 70% - 80% alcohol. These percentages cause the denaturation of the viral proteins. 95% ethanol causes the rapid coagulation of the proteins in the viral envelope, therefore alcohol cannot penetrate the virus. The virus is then inactivated but not decomposed, thereby it can renew its activity under certain conditions. 70% ethanol causes protein denaturation and fats dissolution in the viral membrane but at a slower rate, so that ethanol can penetrate the virus before the coagulation of the membrane proteins can prevent it. Upon ethanol penetration, the whole virus coagulates and is destroyed.

9 Myth:

Surgical masks can be worn in one of two ways: with the blue side facing outwards – then the mask prevents the infection of other persons; with the white side outwards – then the mask prevents the infection of the person wearing the mask.

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✓ Fact

Not true. Surgical masks should always be worn with the blue side facing outwards. If a sick person wears the mask (without knowing it) the mask will considerably reduce the risk of environmental infection; when a healthy person wears it – the mask reduces the wearer's infection risk, all the more so when both parties wear a mask.

10 Myth:

Any cloth or mask, including a thin cardboard mask, is efficient against infection.

✓ Fact

There are three main masks on the market: 1. A respiratory protective mask – the best known mask of this kind is an N95 that filters at least 95% of the 3.0-micron particles (also most of the larger and smaller particles). This mask must fit the face for proper seal and requires handling skills for putting it on and removing it. It is not comfortable to wear during long working hours. 2. Surgical masks – these masks are made of non-woven cotton and are not sealed. This mask can block large drops and reduces the hand contact with nose and mouth mucosa. It is easy to use and may be used for two consecutive hours. 3. Cloth masks – there is no defined standard for their production, therefore cloth masks vary in fabric density, moisture absorption, ventilation and fitting to the face - all factors that affect their efficacy. The most recommended cloth masks are the ones with three layers of woven cotton fabric. They block mostly the passage of large drops.

11 Myth:

Drying hands with the aid of a hand drier at the public toilets, disinfection with a UV lamp, or exposure to direct sunlight for several hours can kill the virus.

✓ Fact

Hand driers are efficient for drying hands only. The virus can withstand high temperatures. There is evidence that it is possible to kill the virus using a UV lamp, but UV lamps shall not be used for hands or any other skin area disinfection since they can cause transformational damage to skin. In addition, there is no evidence that direct sunlight exposure for several hours kills the virus. In spite of its relation to bats, it is not a vampire.

12 Myth:

Do not use Nurofen off-the-counter drugs since it might worsen the Corona virus symptoms.

✓ Fact

Hearsay. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends unequivocally not to discontinue the use of Nurofen.

13 Myth:

The Corona virus binds to ACE receptors. People treated with high blood pressure medications must stop taking them during the current pandemic since some of these drugs block ACE receptors and as a result these people's cells overexpress ACE. Fact

There is no proof that people who take ACE blockers are at a greater risk to develop Covid19 complications. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized that people with high blood pressure should not stop taking their ACE blocker medications. One research mentions that taking ACE inhibitors improves the clinical condition of people with high blood pressure.

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14 Myth:

Dogs and cats can transmit the Corona virus.

✓ Fact

There are currently several researches according to which cats can carry the new Corona virus. As for dogs, the evidence is yet unclear. In all cases documented thus far it seems pets are infected by humans and not vice versa. Usually, the virus can live for several days on the pet's fur therefore it turns into an infected surface when petting. In spite of the fact that there is no unequivocal evidence on the subject, the WHO recommends that upon isolation – one should do so without the pet.

15 Myth:

5G networks caused global spread of the Corona virus

✓ Fact

Viruses cannot travel on radio or cellular waves . In addition, the Corona virus has spread in many countries that have not yet installed 5G infrastructures. The virus spreads by droplets transmission only when a person speaks, shouts, coughs or sneezes.