

Coronavirus:

Separating the facts from the fear



Singing River Health System and other healthcare agencies are working to limit and slow potential spread of COVID-19, and all Mississippians can help.

We advise you to stay informed with reliable sources of information, take everyday actions to protect yourself and those you love, and share accurate information with neighbors, friends and co-workers, especially people who may have difficulty receiving or understanding the information.

It is normal to be scared, distressed or angry when you hear about a disease outbreak, even when you are at a low risk of getting sick. Be careful not to turn fear and anger towards people who may become sick or healthcare workers.

1. FEAR: Hand washing is not completely effective. I need to have alcohol hand sanitizers to protect myself. False.

FACT: Hand washing with soap and water is the **most effective** way to eliminate contagion. **Sing your favorite song** for 20 seconds.

2. FEAR: The only way to prevent catching COVID-19 is to wear a face mask. False.

FACT: People who show symptoms of COVID-19 should use face masks to help prevent the spread of the disease to *others*. There are very well-established scientific guidelines for when hospital employees and others need to wear personal protective equipment. **Social distancing and not touching your face is a more effective** way to protect yourself.

3. FEAR: A common way to get COVID-19 is from another person touching me. False.

FACT: **Self-contamination is more likely**, as the average person touches their own face 90 times per day. Pretend you have a dog cone on your face. **Don't touch your face!**

4. FEAR: The virus is most likely spread from sharing the same air. False.

FACT: COVID-19 is most likely spread when people are in close contact with an infected person (within about 6 feet), spread through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and those droplets make their way into another person's mouth, nose or eyes. This means **spit and snot are the main culprit, not air.**

5. FEAR: Individuals must watch and read everything about COVID-19 to stay well informed and protect their family. False.

6. FEAR: I am young and do not need to worry about where I travel or my hand hygiene or Coronavirus. False.

7. FEAR: People are more contagious after they have had it for a week. False.

8. FEAR: Children are most at risk, which is why school is out. False.

9. FEAR: Cough or fever most likely indicates you have COVID-19. False.

10. FEAR: The new coronavirus is man-made as part of a conspiracy. False.

11. FEAR: Hospitalization is recommended for anyone who tests positive for COVID-19. False.

12. FEAR: COVID-19 is usually deadly. False.

FACT: Too much media exposure can heighten one's anxiety. You get what you need, and leave the rest. Stay informed through valid resources like the CDC but without overdoing it. Just like sugar or alcohol, anything in excess including **too much TV / Internet is bad for you**, both mentally and physically.

FACT: Many of our residents are over age 60 or disabled, so it is critical that we work together to protect this population from infection. Do your part to be safe and protect others: wash your hands, cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and practice social distancing. It's not always about you. **It is more for them than you in most cases.**

FACT: People are **most contagious when they are most symptomatic** (first 2 days of symptoms). Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a higher risk of infection to other people.

FACT: Children are probably at slightly less risk to have ill effects unless they have an underlying condition like asthma, etc. However, they can be most likely to spread it to vulnerable adults because they are less likely to show symptoms and not wash their hands properly.

FACT: It is far more likely that patients with cough or fever symptoms have an illness **other than COVID-19** such as the flu, strep throat or pneumonia. Before testing for Coronavirus, other viruses or illnesses should be ruled out first.

FACT: COVID-19 can be **traced back to bats**, according to the Centers for Disease Control, and many patients in Wuhan, China, were linked to a large seafood and live animal market.

FACT: People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to isolate at home during their illness. Illness can be severe and require hospitalization, but most individuals recover by **resting, drinking plenty of liquids, and taking pain and fever-reducing medications.** (See CDC on what to do if diagnosed.)

FACT: Data suggests more than **80% of cases result in mild symptoms.** Those with other existing medical vulnerabilities (chronic medical conditions like autoimmune disorders, high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) are at the greatest risk for severe disease if infected with COVID-19.

13. FEAR: Coronavirus is the deadliest virus known to man. False.

FACT: Although COVID-19 does appear to be more serious than influenza, it is absolutely **not the deadliest virus** that people have faced. Others, such as Ebola, Bubonic Plague, Smallpox, and many others have had much higher mortality rates.

14. FEAR: Prepare for the worst and buy everything needed right now. False.

FACT: While preparedness is good, going to this extreme is not without harm. **Hoarding can deprive those who are in crucial need**, like the elderly, healthcare providers and those medically vulnerable. Focus on acting out of reason and rationality not fear and panic. Those things could do more harm than the threat the virus poses. Still being kind to those around you can be uplifting in this unsettling time.

15. FEAR: You can protect yourself from COVID-19 by swallowing or gargling with bleach, taking acetic acid or steroids, or using essential oils, salt water, ethanol or other substances. False.

FACT: None of these recommendations protects you from getting COVID-19, and some of these practices may be dangerous. **Swallowing bleach can kill you faster than the Coronavirus.** The best ways to protect yourself from this coronavirus (and other viruses) include: washing your hands frequently with soap and water, not touching your face, practice social distancing and especially avoid close contact with people who are sick, coughing and sneezing. You can avoid spreading germs by coughing into the crook of your elbow and staying home when you are sick.

16. FEAR: The virus stays on a surface even after it is cleaned. False.

FACT: The virus **can be effectively inactivated** from surfaces with a solution of either alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or bleach (please do not mix these chemicals), in just one minute. It is not certain how long it stays on surfaces, but it is not long.

17. FEAR: Hospitals are going to shut down due to lack of supplies. False.

FACT: This is America. Most will be able to figure things out or at least seek support from other health system partners. Capitalism, competition, and innovation will prevail. **The silver lining is that necessity is the mother of innovation.**

18. FEAR: This will thin out the population. False.

FACT: More likely, there will be a **baby boom** in approximately nine months.

19. FEAR: The Coronavirus is bright red with blue tentacles, fluorescent green, glowing orange or horror dirty brown. False.

FACT: The **scary colors are added or enhanced** by media for effect.

20. FEAR: If they give me the flu shot, it might give me the flu. False.

FACT: Getting the flu shot does not give you the flu. There is proven science behind this fact. Also, while it doesn't prevent the flu every single time, if 80% of the people who would have otherwise gotten the flu did not, that makes more testing and care time available for those who might have things like the Coronavirus. Also, it will **save you both from being sick with the flu and from worrying** about what your symptoms are if it prevents you from getting the flu. And if you are high risk, it could actually save your life.

21. FEAR: A common way to get COVID-19 is from drinking Corona beer. False.

FACT: Drinking enough beer to elevate your blood alcohol level could be dangerous for other reasons. **Drink responsibly!**

22. FEAR: This could be the end of the world. False.

FACT: As with all past outbreaks, this one will eventually come to an end before we do. If anything, this shows why vaccinations are so important. **Humanity will survive.**

If you are concerned that you may have COVID-19, please stay home and call our Hotline at 228-809-5044 to be screened over the phone by a licensed medical provider.

STAY
CALM
AND STAY SINGING RIVER
STRONG.



Singing River
Health System