



HEALTH NEWS AND MYTH BUSTERS



The World Health Professions Alliance speaks for more than 31 million health professionals worldwide, assembling essential knowledge and experience from the key health professions in more than 130 countries.

World health professionals calling governments to prioritize support for healthcare workers in the front line against coronavirus

March 2020 - The world's health professionals are calling for governments to support healthcare staff in the battle against Covid-19

The World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA), which represents 31 million healthcare professionals, stands in solidarity with all healthcare workers across the globe who are on the front line in the fight to contain the current coronavirus epidemic.

All around the world, nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists, dentists and physicians are focusing their efforts on preventing, diagnosing, containing, and treating Covid-19 patients.

They are putting themselves at risk as they battle to protect their communities, often without the required personal protective equipment, such as masks and hazardous material suits, that can keep them safe from infection and therefore able to carry on their vital work.

The WHPA is calling on governments and healthcare organisations to support front line healthcare workers in any way they can, but especially and urgently through the supply of crucial personal protective equipment.

They should also ensure that staff are getting adequate breaks during their shifts, and time off between shifts, to be able to

carry on in what could be a long-term global crisis.

Working in such conditions also takes its toll on the psychological health of staff, so appropriate support services for staff must also be put in place as a priority.

Dr. Otmar Kloiber, WHPA Chair and Secretary General of the World Medical Association, said: "It is sad that nurses and physicians died during this crisis and probably more will die. Deaths which may have been avoidable with better emergency preparedness. This crisis should be a wake-up call for politicians and societies to make the necessary investment in emergency preparedness and to look into the vulnerability of our supply chains."

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said: "We are calling on governments to maximize support for nurses and other health professionals in the front line against coronavirus, both in terms of providing the necessary protective equipment and recognizing the psychological pressures they are under and addressing them. We also urge the manufacturers of personal protective equipment to do everything in their power to increase supplies which can help keep healthcare workers safe.

It is essential too that governments in their top-level decision making on combatting the virus, include the experience and

leadership skills of nurses. Nurses' advice, based on their observations from the front line, are invaluable in containing the virus, as we have seen with previous epidemics." FIP Chief Executive Officer, Dr Catherine Duggan said: "Pharmacists and the pharmacy workforce at community and hospital pharmacies and clinical biology laboratories are preventing the spread of the

new coronavirus disease, advising the public, and supporting the efficient management of infection by healthcare systems. Since pharmacies are often the first point of contact with the health system, we call on governments to support them in these roles and to count on pharmacists worldwide as key partners in the global effort to contain the outbreak."

Culled from: <https://www.whpa.org/news-resources/statements/world-health-professionals-calling-governments-prioritise-support>

COVID-19 ADVICE FOR THE PUBLIC: MYTH BUSTERS

Are there any drugs licensed for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19?

- While several drug trials are ongoing, there is currently no proof that hydroxychloroquine or any other drug can cure or prevent COVID-19. The misuse of hydroxychloroquine can cause serious side effects and illness and even lead to death. WHO is coordinating efforts to develop and evaluate medicines to treat COVID-19.

Adding pepper to your soup or other meals DOES NOT prevent or cure COVID-19

- Hot peppers in your food, though very tasty, cannot prevent or cure COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself against the new coronavirus is to keep at least 1 metre away from others and to wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. It is also beneficial for your general health to maintain a balanced diet, stay well hydrated, exercise regularly and sleep well.

COVID-19 IS NOT transmitted through houseflies

- To date, there is no evidence or information to suggest that the COVID-19 virus transmitted through houseflies. The virus that cause COVID-19 spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. You can also become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes,

nose or mouth before washing your hands. To protect yourself, keep at least 1-metre distance from others and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces. Clean your hands thoroughly and often and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.

Are antibiotics effective in preventing and treating the new coronavirus?

- No, antibiotics do not work against viruses, only bacteria. The new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus and, therefore, antibiotics should not be used as a means of prevention or treatment. However, if you are hospitalized for the 2019-nCoV, you may receive antibiotics because bacterial co-infection is possible.

Does the COVID-19 affect older people, or are younger people also susceptible?

- People of all ages can be infected by the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by following good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene.

Can eating garlic help prevent infection with the new coronavirus?

- Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus.

Can regularly rinsing your nose with saline help prevent infection with the new coronavirus?

- No. There is no evidence that regularly rinsing the nose with saline has protected people from infection with the new coronavirus. There is some limited evidence that regularly rinsing nose with saline can help people recover more quickly from the common cold. However, regularly rinsing the nose has not been shown to prevent respiratory infections.

Do vaccines against pneumonia protect you against the new coronavirus?

- No. Vaccines against pneumonia, such as pneumococcal vaccine and Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib) vaccine, do not provide protection against the new coronavirus. The virus is so new and different that it needs its own vaccine. Researchers are trying to develop a vaccine against 2019-nCoV, and WHO is supporting their efforts. Although these vaccines are not effective against 2019-nCoV, vaccination against respiratory illnesses is highly recommended to protect your health.

Do Thermal Scanners detect COVID-19?

- Thermal scanners CANNOT detect COVID-19. Thermal scanners are effective in detecting people who have a fever (i.e. have a higher than normal body temperature). They cannot detect people who are infected with COVID-19. There are many causes of fever. Call your healthcare provider if you need assistance or seek immediate medical care if you have fever and live in an area with malaria or dengue.

Can Ultra-violet (UV) lamps be used to disinfect the skin?

- Ultra-violet (UV) lamps should not be used to disinfect hands or other areas of your skin. UV radiation can cause skin irritation and damage your eyes. Cleaning your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or washing your hands with soap and water are the most effective ways to remove the virus.

Are hand dryers effective in killing the new coronavirus?

- No. Hand dryers are not effective in killing the 2019-nCoV. To protect yourself against the new coronavirus, you should frequently clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Once your hands are cleaned, you should dry them thoroughly by using paper towels or a warm air dryer.

Spraying and introducing bleach or another disinfectant into your body WILL NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous

- Do not under any circumstance spray or introduce bleach or any other disinfectant into your body. These substances can be poisonous if ingested and cause irritation and damage to your skin and eyes. Bleach and disinfectant should be used carefully to disinfect surfaces only. Remember to keep chlorine (bleach) and other disinfectants out of reach of children.

Does drinking methanol, ethanol or bleach prevent or cure COVID-19?

- No. And this practice can be extremely dangerous. Methanol, ethanol, and bleach are poisons. Drinking them can lead to disability and death. Methanol, ethanol, and bleach are sometimes used in cleaning products to kill the virus on surfaces – however you should never drink them. They will not kill the virus in your body and they will harm your internal organs.

To protect yourself against COVID-19, disinfect objects and surfaces,

especially the ones you touch regularly. You can use diluted bleach or alcohol for that. Make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.

Can COVID-19 be transmitted through mosquito bites?

- The new coronavirus CANNOT be transmitted through mosquito bites. To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes. The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. To protect yourself, clean your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Also, avoid close contact with anyone who is coughing and sneezing.

Does taking a hot bath prevent the new coronavirus disease?

- Taking a hot bath will not prevent you from catching COVID-19. Your normal body temperature remains around 36.5°C to 37°C, regardless of the temperature of your bath or shower. Actually, taking a hot bath with extremely hot water can be harmful, as it can burn you. The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by frequently cleaning your hands. By doing this you eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

Exposing yourself to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25C degrees DOES NOT prevent the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

- You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you clean

your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

Can Cold weather and snow kill the new coronavirus?

- There is no reason to believe that cold weather can kill the new coronavirus or other diseases. The normal human body temperature remains around 36.5°C to 37°C, regardless of the external temperature or weather. The most effective way to protect yourself against the new coronavirus is by frequently cleaning your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water.

COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates

- The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by maintaining physical distance of at least 1 – 2 metres from others and frequently cleaning your hands. By doing this you eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

Does drinking alcohol protect against COVID-19?

- Drinking alcohol does not protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous. Frequent or excessive alcohol consumption can increase your risk of health problems.

Being able to hold your breath for 10 seconds or more without coughing or feeling discomfort DOES NOT mean you are free from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or any other lung disease.

- The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are dry cough, tiredness and fever. Some people may develop more severe forms of the disease, such as pneumonia. The best way to confirm if you have the virus producing COVID-19 disease is with a laboratory test. You cannot confirm it with this breathing exercise, which can even be dangerous.

You can recover from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Catching the new coronavirus DOES NOT mean you will have it for life.

- Most of the people who catch COVID-19 can recover and eliminate the virus from their bodies. If you catch the disease, make sure you treat your symptoms. If you have cough, fever, and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early – but call your health facility by telephone first. Most patients recover thanks to supportive care.

5G mobile networks DO NOT spread COVID-19

- Viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks. COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose.

Culled from: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

