

Expert Debunks Misconceptions about Covid-19 Vaccine

Professor Mansur O. Oche, a Professor of Community Medicine, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital, Sokoto, has debunked the misconceptions associated with Covid-19 vaccine.

Below are the highlights of the misconceptions and facts on Covid-19:

Misconception: The rapidity with which the vaccines were produced makes them unsafe.

Fact: Covid-19 vaccines have gone through scientific stages of clinical trials and safety reviews.

Misconception: One can get covid-19 infection from the vaccines.

Fact: Covid-19 infection cannot be gotten from the vaccines as none of the currently authorized vaccines is capable of producing the virus.

Misconception: The vaccine can alter one's genetic codes.

Fact: The Covid-19 vaccine does not alter one's genetic codes. When injected into the body, the vaccine will make the body to produce immunity against Covid-19 and has nothing to do with one's genetic codes.

Misconception: Severe side effects do occur such as allergic reactions

Fact: Reports of serious side effects are very rare. There are just common minor expected side effects, such as a sore arm at the injection site and a mild fever, which usually subside after a day or two.

Misconception: Anyone who has had covid-19 infection does not need to be vaccinated.

Fact: Having the virus dose not immunize the body against the virus. Therefore, health experts advice that people who have had Covid-19 infection should be vaccinated.

Misconception: The fatality rate of Covid-19 is so low, so one does not need to be vaccinated

Fact: Covid-19 vaccine reduces the risk of severe infection and hospitalization. People who are vaccinated are probably less likely to transmit the disease.

Misconception: There is no need for mask wearing and social distancing after receiving Covid-19 vaccine.

Fact: Everyone must remain cautious and continue to wear masks, practice physical distancing and observe enhanced hygiene routines. While vaccines are effective, they do not stop every case of Covid-19 infection and transmission, so these precautionary measures are important at all times.

Misconception: People with underlying conditions should not be vaccinated.

Fact: Everyone, 12 years of age and older is eligible for the Covid 19 vaccine. The vaccines are safe to be administered to even people that are sick.

Misconception: Covid-19 vaccines are not effective against the new variants.

Fact: Experts are watching this very carefully. If a change in vaccine needs to be made, the vaccines can be quickly adjusted for new strains, in a similar way that flu vaccines are adjusted each year.

Misconception: The Covid-19 vaccine includes a tracking device.

Fact: This claim is false. The truth is the vaccine contains a substance that identifies the origin of the vaccine. It is not meant to track people or to cause any harm.

Misconception: The Covid-19 vaccine causes infertility in women.

Fact: Experts say the vaccine is not capable of causing infertility.

Misconception: Certain blood types have less severe Covid-19 infections, so getting a vaccine is not necessary.

Fact: There is no scientific proof for to show that certain blood types have less severe Covid-19 infections.

Misconception: Receiving Covid-19 vaccine causes one to be magnetic

Fact: Receiving a Covid-19 vaccine will not make you or any part of your body magnetic, even the site of vaccination which is usually your arm. There is no ingredient in the vaccine that can cause any part of the body to be magnetic. The Covid 19 vaccines are free from metals such as iron, nickel, cobalt, lithium, and rare earth alloys, as well as any manufactured products such as microelectronics, electrodes, carbon nanotubes, and nanowire semiconductors.

Misconception: The Covid-19 vaccines authorized for use shed or release any of their components.

Fact: Vaccine shedding is the term used to describe the release or discharge of any of the vaccine components in or outside of the body. Vaccine shedding can only occur when a vaccine contains a weakened version of the virus. None of the vaccines authorized for use contains a live virus. Vaccine components are not shed by Covid-19 vaccines, so it is not possible for the any of the vaccine components to accumulate in the body tissue or organs, including the ovaries.

Misconception: Being near someone who received a Covid-19 vaccine can affect menstrual cycle

Fact: Menstrual cycle cannot be affected by being near someone who received a Covid-19 vaccine. Many other factors like stress, anxiety, changes in schedule, sleeplessness and changes in diet or exercise and infections may affect menstrual cycle but not Covid-19 vaccine.

Misconception: Spraying chlorine or alcohol on the skin kills viruses in the body.

Fact: Applying alcohol or chlorine to the skin can cause harm, especially if it enters the eyes or mouth. These chemicals can disinfect surfaces, but people should not use them on their bodies. Also, these products cannot kill viruses inside the body.

Misconception: Children cannot get Covid-19

Fact: Anyone, of any age, can develop the infection that causes Covid-19. So far, most Covid-19 cases have been in adults, but children are not immune. That said, most children who develop Covid-19 have mild symptoms or none at all.

Misconception: Everyone with Covid-19 dies.

Fact: This is false. Covid-19 is fatal for a small percentage of people who develop the illness. The WHO reported that around 80% of people with Covid-19, experience a relatively mild form of the illness and do not need specialist treatment in a hospital. Such mild symptoms may include a fever, a cough, a sore throat, tiredness, and shortness of breath.

Misconception: You have to be with someone infected with Coronavirus for 10 minutes to be infected with the virus.

Fact: The longer a person is close to someone with the Coronavirus, the likelier the virus is transmitted. However, the virus can be transmitted from person to person in less than 10 minutes.

Misconception: Rinsing the nose with saline water (salt water) protects against the coronavirus.

Fact: There is no evidence that a saline nasal rinse protects against any respiratory infections. Some researchers suggest that a rinse might ease the symptoms of acute upper respiratory tract infections, but scientists have not found that this technique reduces the risk of infection.

Misconception: You can protect yourself against covid-19 by gargling bleach

Fact: People should never put bleach in their mouths. Gargling bleach could never benefit a person's health. Bleach is corrosive and can cause serious health damage

Misconception: Antibiotics kill the Coronavirus.

Fact: Antibiotics only kill bacteria. They do not kill viruses.

Misconception: Garlic protects against Coronaviruses.

Fact: Some research suggests that garlic may slow the growth of some species of bacteria. Covid-19 results from a virus, not bacteria. There is no evidence that garlic can protect people from Covid-19.

Misconception: Home remedies can cure and protect against Covid-19.

Fact: Practices that improve the immunity are encouraged but the best approach is to wash the hands frequently, for 20 seconds at a time, to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, to wear a face covering in public, and to avoid crowded places.

Misconception: The virus will die off when temperatures rise.

Fact: Some viruses, such as cold and flu viruses, spread more easily in colder months. This does not mean that their transmission stops in warmer weather. As it stands, scientists do not know how temperature changes influence the behaviour of Corona Virus

Misconception: 5G helps spread Corona Virus.

Fact: This is not true. It is also worth noting that Covid-19 has significantly impacted countries with very little 5G coverage, such as Iran.

Misconception: Drinking alcohol reduces the risk of Coronavirus infection

Fact: This is not true. Consuming any alcohol poses health risks, but consuming high-strength ethyl alcohol (ethanol) commonly known in Nigeria as *Ogogoro*, particularly if it has been chemically adulterated, can result in severe health consequences, including death. Alcohol use, especially heavy use, weakens the immune system; thus reduces the ability to cope with infectious diseases. It may make people more vulnerable to Covid-19.