



government  
communications

Department:  
Government Communication and Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## COVID-19 FAQs AND MYTH BUSTING

### ***Does the long term wearing of masks have any negative impact on one's health?***

**Answer:** Prolonged use of any face mask has not been shown to cause carbon dioxide toxicity or lack of adequate oxygen in healthy people. Healthcare workers routinely wear masks for prolonged periods while performing their duties.

Cloth masks provide an additional layer of protection by reducing the number of microorganisms that a person releases into the air. Mass mask wearing will ensure that fewer potential viral droplets are released into the air. Wearing a mask reduces the risk that someone will be exposed to the virus.

### ***Why must bodies be wrapped in plastic bags?***

**Answer:** The human remains of a person who has died from coronavirus are considered contagious and should be kept only in designated mortuaries. Under no circumstances shall the human remains be directly handled, whether for aesthetic, hygiene preparations, cultural or religious reasons. Human remains shall be placed in transparent leak proof double body bags and sealed. A third non-transparent and unsealed bag must be added when the body is moved. The third bag should have handles and an appropriate BIOHAZARD warning tag written "Hazard Group 4 Pathogens" before being transported to mortuary.

No one is allowed to exhume a body for any reason unless they have permission from the relevant authorities to do so. If someone wants to exhume a body for any reason it must be done with permission to ensure everyone's safety

### ***Myth: Lockdown measures deprive people of their freedoms and are in keeping with an authoritarian regime.***

**Answer:** The current measures are temporary and have been enacted to protect our nation and her people. Our freedoms will never be at risk and are protected by the Constitution, Bill of Rights and our commitment to the rule of law and democracy and freedom.

### ***Myth: Vaccines are unsafe and normal safety protocols have been circumvented to fast track their authorisation for use.***

**Answer:** The fast development and approval of vaccines is a great human feat worthy of celebration. It has been possible because we have learnt over many decades how to make and test vaccines and we were able to take those lessons and challenge ourselves to produce a vaccine much quicker.

No step in the development, testing or ratification of the COVID-19 vaccines has been skipped. The world was able to develop vaccines fast because scientists and governments around the world collaborated in a manner that has never been achieved before and pooled resources and information to ensure that everyone can contribute to the knowledge. This allowed us to move much quicker than we have done before. The socio-economic devastation the virus is

causing is what has motivated developers to move with urgency without compromising on quality standards.

***Myth: Vaccines can alter the recipient's DNA.***

**Answer:** Vaccines work by stimulating the body the same way the virus would if someone were infected.

That means when you receive the vaccine the body then recognises that it looks like the coronavirus and then it releases certain chemicals that start a chain reaction to make immune cells that can fight the real virus.

The vaccine does not work on the DNA of the body.

Some people think that because some of the vaccines are made using RNA technology that means the RNA will interact with the DNA - that is not how it works. The technology is simply the way the vaccine is made - not what it will do to the body.

***Myth: Vaccines contain a form of microchip that will be used to track and control an individual.***

**Answer:** There is no vaccine "microchip" and there is no evidence to support claims that such a move is planned. Receiving a vaccine will not allow people to be tracked and personal information would not be entered into a database.

***Myth: Big business is pushing vaccines to improve profits.***

**Answer:** The COVID-19 crisis has caused massive upheaval across the globe and no nation has been spared. A vaccine represents the best hope to save lives and to restore our way of life; many governments have therefore entered into direct talks with vaccine makers to ensure a timely supply of vaccines.

***Myth: Government is complicit with big business in pushing vaccines despite the risks.***

**Answer:** Government is committed to saving lives and livelihoods. The fastest way to return to our way of life is through ensuring that the majority of the population is protected from the virus. Vaccines are the simplest and most effective way to do this.

***Myth: 5G networks cause the coronavirus through radiation emissions.***

**Answer:** The World Health Organisation has made it clear that viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. It is also a fact that 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.

***Myth: The Vaccines have the mark of the Beast – 666.***

**Answer:** Vaccines are made to save lives and are made by technology. They have no connection with any religious organisations and cannot be infused with spirits, demons or other abstract ingredients. There is no conspiracy to possess, bewitch or control anybody.

***Myth: Bill Gates is pushing vaccines to control the world.***

**Answer:** Bill Gates, through his foundation with his wife The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have joined thousands of other organisations worldwide to help combat COVID-19. As government we are always careful to work together with organisations and people that share our ideals and aspirations for South African people. Our sovereignty and our people will never be compromised even as we work together with various entities all over the world.

***Myth: Vaccines are a way for our former oppressors to oppress us again.***

**Answer:** The devastation of colonialisation and apartheid is still very much alive in the consciousness of our leaders and our people - government would never allow a situation where any country or nation would be allowed to oppress our people through any means.

Scientists and governments all over the world, including our own, have contributed to the knowledge that has led to the development of the vaccines. It has not just been the work of Western and rich countries but a global collaboration.

Vaccines are a way of liberating all of us from the socioeconomic devastation of COVID-19, which we have all suffered globally.