

COVID-19 Myth Busting

MYTH:
COVID-19 is
not real,
it's a hoax

FACT: COVID-19 is a virus that affects everybody differently. You or someone you know may have gotten it and had few symptoms, or not even noticed. Meanwhile, others have died. From March 2019 - August 2022, COVID infected over 500 million people and killed more than 6 million people worldwide. In that time 374,594 people have gotten sick and 3,747 have died in BC. Not experiencing severe impacts of COVID yourself doesn't mean that they don't happen.

MYTH:
COVID-19 is not
that bad.
It's the same
as the flu

FACT: The flu (**infl**uenza) and COVID-19 are two different viruses. There are similarities in how the flu and COVID-19 are passed around, and how we protect against them (e.g. vaccines). But COVID-19 causes more severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. For example: triple the amount of people died from COVID, than the flu in Canada in 2020.

MYTH:
COVID-19 rates
dropped after
mandates were
relaxed

FACT: Relaxing mandates did not lead to a drop in COVID-19 rates. Mandates (such as travel restrictions and masking) protected people from the spread of COVID-19 before vaccines were widely available. BC had one of the lowest COVID-19 hospitalization and death rates in the world due to mandates such as: masking, physical distancing, or venue capacity limits. The mandates led to fewer people with COVID-19 in BC being hospitalised, which helped keep hospitals running.

MYTH:
COVID-19 was
created by the
government to
control us

FACT: During times of crisis, theories about the government's role are common. The pandemic has changed our lives! When we don't have control over what's happening, we can blame other groups (e.g. people who believe the pandemic is real) or power (e.g. the government). Scientists have looked deeply at the genetic features of COVID-19 and found that the virus was not human-made. Public Health Orders and mandates can feel like ways to control us, but less people die in places where people wear masks, stay apart, and get vaccinated.

This Myth-Busting Poster was created by the ADVANCE Study Team, with the support of people who were incarcerated at the time of the study (2022). For references, please see *Making Informed Choices: A COVID-19 Activity and Info Book, Reference Edition* by the ADVANCE Study.

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MYTH:

The vaccine gives you COVID-19

FACT: There are several types of vaccines, and none of them will give you COVID-19. The vaccines do not contain the live virus. In Canada, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are used the most. Both are what's called mRNA vaccines. mRNA teaches your body how to make a protein similar to a protein on the COVID-19 virus. Then your body creates antibodies against the protein. Antibodies are like armour that fighter cells make to protect you from infection.

MYTH:

The vaccine is a way for the government to control us

FACT: In places where more people are vaccinated, less people get sick and die from COVID-19. The government put mandates in place as an incentive for people to get vaccinated, so that less people would get very sick or die from COVID. Measures like this have been shown to increase vaccination rates. Vaccines are for your protection. From September 2021 to February 2022, people with 2 doses plus a booster of COVID-19 vaccines had 50-95% protection from infection and were 90% protected from hospitalization.

MYTH:

The vaccine contains microchips

FACT: The vaccine does not contain microchips. At one point, there was talk of putting a microchip on the outside of vaccine vials. This would have been used to give healthcare providers information about the vaccine (e.g. expiry date, batch number). Videos of people talking about this were edited to spread lies. The vaccine has never contained microchips. That was never on the table to begin with.

MYTH:

The vaccine is suspicious and unsafe

FACT: In Canada, there are no confirmed deaths from COVID-19 vaccines, but over 40,000 have died from COVID-19. Vaccines go through 3 phases of testing to prove their safety:

- Experiments in labs
- Animal testing
- Human clinical trials (3 rounds: <100, 100+, 1000+)

After vaccines are approved, any reactions are monitored. As of May 27, 2022, the rate of serious reactions across all COVID-19 vaccines in Canada is 0.011% - about 100th of 1%, or 1 in 11,000.

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MYTH:

The vaccine makes you sick

FACT: There are several types of vaccines, and none of them will give you COVID-19. They teach your body how to fight off the virus, which can cause side-effects. The most common side-effects include redness, soreness, swelling around the injection site, chills, tiredness, muscle and joint pain, headaches, and mild fever. Not everyone gets side effects, but if you do, it can be a sign that the vaccine is working. In Canada, only 1 in 25,000 people have developed severe rare side-effects. Nobody has died from receiving the vaccine.

MYTH:

The vaccine makes you a zombie

FACT: Zombies are not real. They are made-up undead creatures in pop culture. How we think of zombies is taken from Haitian culture. None of the COVID-19 vaccine side effects come close to zombie-like symptoms. But the panic-buying and empty store shelves early in the pandemic may have reminded people of zombie films. Our brains can trick us into thinking things are true because they are familiar (e.g. empty shelves = zombie apocalypse).

MYTH:

The vaccine causes Autism

FACT: Scientists have proven that nothing in any vaccines causes autism. This myth was created by Dr. Andrew Wakefield who falsely claimed finding a link between vaccines and autism (1990s). Wakefield had made up the claims because he had been paid by lawyers who wanted to sue vaccine companies. Other rare side-effects from vaccines like Bells Palsy have been confirmed, and people who experienced that are being compensated by the government.

MYTH:

The vaccine gives you diabetes, heart problems, etc.

FACT: COVID-19 infection has been proven to cause heart problems. You are much more likely to get heart problems from the virus than from the vaccine. People who have recovered from COVID-19 infection have some protection from future illness. But it's unclear how long that lasts. Getting vaccinated, even if it's after you've had COVID-19, lowers your chances of getting very sick in the future.

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