

The coronavirus pandemic currently shocking the world gained entry into Nigeria with its first case confirmed on the 27th of February, 2020 in Lagos state. The discovery spiralled into a frenzy of misinformation as the NCDC and Federal Ministry of Health worked to allay citizens' fears and contain the outbreak. It is important that we all play a role in beating the virus by sharing only validated information and promoting effective preventive measures.

The Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC) gathers rumours, concerns and questions from communities across Nigeria to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, NGOs and citizens. By providing the public with facts, the CCC ensures a better understanding of needs regarding the coronavirus and debunks rumours before they can do more harm. Information sharing will be critical to defeating the virus, due to the diverse cultural backgrounds and drawbacks in national education. About 47% of the Nigerian population have access to internet services in according to a 2018 estimate by Statista.

## Advisory on the use of cloth face masks

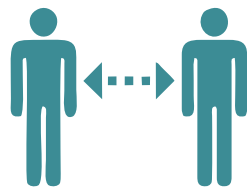
Following the easing of lockdown on the 4th of May, 2020 the Federal Government has mandated the use of face masks in public. The NCDC advises the use of face masks as an additional layer of physical distancing to help block the spread of respiratory droplets from person to person.

Due to the global shortage of medical face masks several countries are turning to alternatives to medical face masks for the general public. A cloth face mask, made out of everyday fabric can act as a barrier to respiratory droplets but cannot completely protect you from COVID-19.

To protect yourselves and loved ones from COVID-19, cloth face masks must be worn in combination with:



1. Avoiding large gatherings



2. Physical distancing by maintaining a distance of 2 metres between yourself and others



3. Regular handwashing with soap under running water



4. Frequent cleaning of surfaces with soap and water or disinfectants

## Who should not wear a cloth face mask:

Cloth face masks are a convenient substitute to medical face masks for the current global situation but they should NOT be worn by individuals who are at a high risk for complications due to COVID-19. The following groups are advised to wear MEDICAL face masks:



1. Health care workers and those caring for the ill



2. Those experiencing respiratory symptoms like coughing and sneezing



3. The elderly and those with chronic medical conditions

## Handling and care of cloth masks:

Because they are reusable, it is very important that cloth face masks are handled and cared for properly to avoid the further spread of infectious agents. Please adhere to the following guidelines for the use of cloth face masks:



1. Make sure the mask has been washed and is unused before first wear



2. Wash your hands with soap under running water before touching the mask. If water is not available, use a hand sanitiser



3. Cover your nose and mouth completely with the mask making sure it fits snugly with no open gaps



4. Avoid touching or adjusting the mask while it is on



5. Wash or sanitise your hands before removing the mask by the straps



6. Wash the mask immediately with soap or detergent and allow to dry completely in the sun



7. Before re-use, iron the mask

## RUMOURS



Taking a lemon with warm water eliminates coronavirus before it gets to the lungs.

Inhaling hot air can kill coronavirus in the lungs by making it too hot for the virus to survive

Irradiating yourself in sunlight can kill the coronavirus by heating up the body

Once I wear a facemask it's okay to participate in social gatherings

Madagascar has developed a cure for COVID-19 that the Nigerian government is too stubborn to buy

## VS



## FACTS

Though it is advisable to stay hydrated and take fruits for general health, there has been no fruit that has been validated as a cure for COVID-19. However, any practices that help boost the immune system such as eating healthy and exercise are encouraged.

The body regulates the temperature of the air that gets into the lungs. If hot air were to get into the lungs unregulated it would cause injury to the organs. Please avoid practices that could lead to personal injury and contact a healthcare provider if you suspect you are having symptoms of COVID-19.

The body has a system it uses in regulating internal body temperature and a person cannot consciously transfer heat from the outside of the body to the inside. Irradiating yourself in sunlight could lead to burns, skin cancer and dehydration.

Wearing a facemask is not a substitute for social distancing, the facemask helps prevent those with the coronavirus from spreading it through breathing, talking, coughing and sneezing. Virus particles are small enough to pass through cloth masks and surgical masks. However, if everyone wears a mask in public it helps reduce the risk of transmission.

The "Covid Organics" health drink being touted by the president of Madagascar as a cure for the coronavirus is currently undergoing clinical trials and has not yet been validated as an effective treatment for the virus. There is little information on its effectiveness or dosage.

# Most clinically vulnerable to COVID-19

According to the CDC, those with the highest risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19 are:

## 1. Elderly people of 65 years or older

## 2. People of all ages with underlying medical conditions such as:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

With the knowledge that a majority of COVID-19 cases are either asymptomatic or show mild symptoms of the disease, it is important that we all take the responsibility to ensure that the most clinically vulnerable among us are not put in harm's way by our actions.

## NCDC molecular laboratory network

Currently, there are fifteen laboratories in Nigeria that can test for COVID-19 and they are all in the NCDC molecular laboratory network. These are;

1. NCDC National Reference Laboratory, FCT
2. Defence Reference Laboratory, FCT
3. Virology Laboratory of Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Lagos State
4. Biosafety Level-3 Laboratory, Lagos State
5. Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital, Edo state
6. Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, Lagos State
7. Virology Laboratory of University College Hospital, Oyo State
8. Federal Teaching Hospital Abakaliki (FETHA), Ebonyi State
9. African Centre of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Diseases, Osun State
10. National Veterinary Research Institute, Vom, Plateau State
11. Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, Kano State
12. DNA Laboratory, Kaduna State
13. University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital, Borno State
14. Usman Danfodio University Teaching Hospital Sokoto
15. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna

Health officials are advised to call 07032864444 for sample transportation and related advice if they have a case that fits the national case definition.