

## 9 COVID conspiracy theories and myths debunked

Even with widely available evidence to the contrary, beliefs are hard to change. Here are some of the most insidious falsehoods about the pandemic, and why they are wrong.

### **Myth 1: The novel coronavirus was engineered in a lab in China.**

Because the pathogen first emerged and began infecting people in Wuhan, China, President Donald Trump has claimed—without evidence—that it started in a laboratory there. Some conspiracy theorists have even speculated it was engineered as a bioweapon, although U.S. intelligence agencies have categorically denied this possibility, stating that the intelligence community “concurs with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified.”

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### **Myth 4: You don't need to wear a mask.**

Although early guidance on masks from the CDC and the WHO was confusing and inconsistent, there is now a strong consensus among public health authorities—supported by numerous studies—that wearing a face covering can limit the transmission of the coronavirus through small exhaled droplets.

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### **Myth 7: Spikes in cases are because of increased testing.**

As coronavirus cases began surging in many parts of the U.S. in recent months, Trump has frequently claimed that these spikes are merely to the result of more people being tested... If that scenario were true, we would expect the percentage of positive tests to go down. But numerous analyses have shown the opposite.

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