



**AFP Fact Check**



En

*Tourists wearing protective masks in Paris (AFP / stringer)*



# refutes viral claims that holding your breath can test for COVID-19



**Facebook posts shared thousands of times claim that holding your breath for more than 10 seconds is an effective test for the novel coronavirus, and that drinking water regularly can prevent the disease. The claims are false; the World Health Organization and other experts said there was no evidence to support these claims.**

The claims have been shared more than 30,000 times on Facebook in more than a dozen countries, including [India](#), [Nigeria](#) and the [USA](#).

"Take a deep breath and hold your breath for more than 10 seconds," reads a [post](#) shared more than 24,000 times on a Cambodian Facebook page.

"If you can do this successfully without coughing ... it shows that you do not have



The post also recommends drinking water every 15 minutes to "wash" the virus "into the stomach", where it will apparently be killed by hydrochloric acid.



Be understanding !!! A Japanese doctor offers excellent advice on preventing COVID-19

New coronavirus may not show symptoms for several days (14-27 days). How can one know if a person is infected? By the time he has a fever and / or a cough and goes to the lung hospital, the patient may have 50% fibrosis, and then it's too late!

Taiwanese experts provide simple self-monitoring that we can do every morning:

Take a deep breath and hold your breath for more than 10 seconds. If you can do this successfully without coughing and without difficulty, without anxiety or chest tightness, it shows that you do not have fibrosis and generally indicate no infection. Check yourself every morning in a fresh air environment

The Japanese physician treating COVID-19 provides the best advice on preventing this:

Everyone should make sure the mouth and throat are always moist. Drink some water every 15 minutes. Why not? Even if the virus gets into your mouth, drinking water or other fluids will help wash it down the esophagus into the stomach. When the virus is in the stomach - the hydrochloric acid in your stomach will kill the germs. If you do not drink enough water regularly, the virus can enter the airways and into your lungs, which is very dangerous to get.

ThisWORLD



7.3K

1.3K comments 24K shares

A screenshot of a Facebook post sharing the false claims, taken on March 10, 2020



precautions" or sharing their own advice to avoid infection by the novel coronavirus.

The disease has [killed more than 4,000 people](#) around the world, mostly in China, since emerging late last year.



A screenshot of comments (with names pixelated) on a Facebook post, taken on March 10, 2020

Similar claims have been circulating in [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#) and Cambodia's official language [Khmer](#).

Contacted by AFP, Karla Ronchini, infectologist at the Gaffrée e Guinle



method" to test for COVID-19.

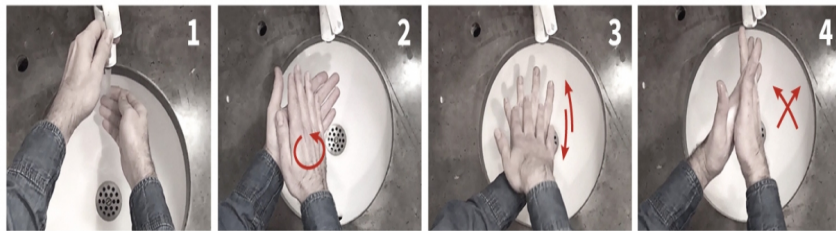
"There is nothing people can do to know if they are infected, except have the test," she told AFP.

World Health Organization (WHO) spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said there was "no evidence" to support the claims.

WHO [recommendations](#) for preventing COVID-19 include washing hands regularly, covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze and staying at home if you feel unwell.

### Coronavirus: the best way to wash your hands

Effective hand washing should take 40-60 seconds

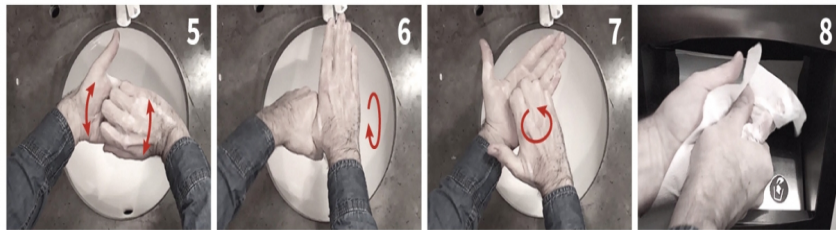


1 Thoroughly wet hands, then cover them completely with soap

2 Rub palm against palm, using a rotating movement

3 Rub the back of the left hand backwards and forwards against the palm of the right hand and vice-versa

4 Rub the spaces between the fingers, palm against palm, fingers interlaced, using a backwards and forwards movement



5 Wash the backs of the fingers, holding them in the palm of the other hand and rotating them laterally

6 Rotate the thumb of the left hand in the palm of the closed right hand and vice-versa

7 Rotate the ends of the fingers of the right hand in the palm of the left hand and vice-versa

8 Rinse and carefully dry hands with a paper towel, using it to close the tap

Source: WHO





of Colombia in Bogota, said claims that successfully holding one's breath to show the absence of "fibrosis" and therefore of the novel coronavirus were incorrect.

"There is not enough time for the patient to develop fibrosis" in cases of COVID-19, he said. "It is a lung disease caused by chronic exposure, sometimes for years, to industrial pollutants."

AFP [previously](#) debunked claims that drinking water every 15 minutes can fend off the virus.

The WHO said on Twitter that while drinking water is important, it "does not prevent coronavirus infection".



We answer more rumours and myths about the 2019 novel [#coronavirus](#).

Q: Can the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) survive in hot and humid climates?

A: Yes, 2019-nCoV has spread to countries with both hot and humid climates, as well as cold and dry.

## Can the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) survive in hot and humid climates?

**Yes, 2019-nCoV has spread to countries with both hot and humid climates, as well as cold and dry.**

Wherever you live, whatever the climate it is important to follow precautions. Wash your hands frequently and cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or a bent elbow. Throw the tissue in the bin and wash your hands immediately afterwards.



**#2019nCoV**  
7 Feb 2020



**World Health Organization Philippines**  
@WHOPhilippines

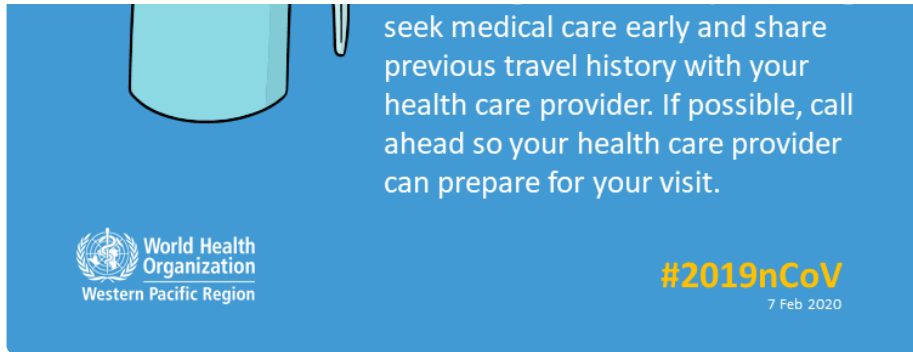
Q: If drinking water alleviates a sore throat, does this also protect against [#2019nCoV](#) infection?

A: While staying hydrated by drinking water is important for overall health, it does not prevent coronavirus infection.

## If drinking water alleviates a sore throat, does this also protect against 2019-nCoV infection?

**While staying hydrated by drinking water is important for overall**





190 2:56 AM - Feb 8, 2020

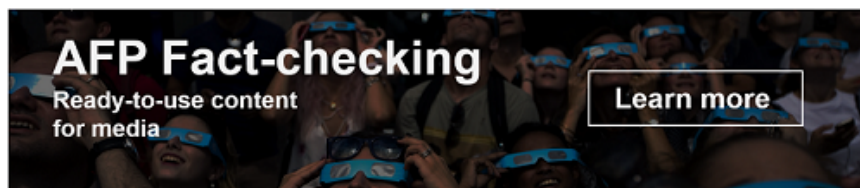
180 people are talking about this

Manuel Vargas, a virologist at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, said it was "not possible to wash away a virus" as it is found inside cells and is therefore impossible to reach.

"It is not yet known if the structure of the virus is able to resist stomach acid," he added.

AFP has [published](#) more than one hundred fact checks reporting on misinformation surrounding the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Translated and adapted by Charlotte Mason





**AFP  
Colombia**

[All posts](#)

NEXT POST

There is no known cure for the novel coronavirus and the patient has not yet been officially cleared

PREVIOUS POST

This local government advertisement in Delhi has been manipulated to add the word 'Muslim'

## Subscriptions

Select the elements to which you want to suscribe or unsubscribe.

the newsletter

Alerts

E-mail \*

Subscribe

Unsubscribe



### About AFP

AFP is a global news agency delivering fast, accurate, in-depth coverage of the events shaping our world from conflicts to politics, economics, sports, entertainment and the latest breakthroughs in health, science and technology.