

COVID-19 ANSWERING THE MYTHS

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BRITISH ISLAMIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Last updated 31st May 2021

MYTH: COVID is no more dangerous than the flu



TRUTH: COVID kills up to 10x more than flu.

Research at John Hopkins University indicates that COVID is more fatal, impacts more people for longer (up to 30 days) and spreads faster than the flu.

Claiming that COVID is no more dangerous than the flu trivialises the destruction this virus has brought to many lives.



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MYTH: GPs are making a lot of money from COVID vaccinations



TRUTH: GPs are paid £12.50 per injection. Most won't make a profit. Some may make a loss.

This includes paying for:

- GP work (8am - 8pm up to 7 days a week)
- Venues (e.g. hall/library) & equipment
- Admin & nursing staff
- Training staff & educating patients
- Monitoring patients after their vaccination



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: COVID vaccine causes irreversible side effects



TRUTH: No patient has so far suffered from irreversible side effects - in trials or in the population.

This myth was spread by misreading a presentation which actually said 3000 of those vaccinated suffered with temporary and reversible side effects.

All medicines have the potential to cause side effects, but this needs to be weighed up against the harm of the disease they are trying to prevent.



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MYTH: COVID vaccine causes irreversible side effects



TRUTH: There have been cases of an extremely rare specific type of blood clot with low platelets. The advice for certain groups and ages of the population has been updated.

Although the risk of these type of severe complications is rare, the guidance has been updated to ensure younger and healthier individuals have access to vaccines which provide a better benefit to risk profile.



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MYTH: COVID is caused by the 5G network



TRUTH: COVID is spreading in countries without 5G. There is no scientific connection.

This myth started as the COVID outbreak coincided with 5G being rolled out in Wuhan. It ignores the fact that 5G had been started in other areas of China before the COVID outbreak.

COVID has also affected countries that do not have 5G.



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MYTH: COVID deaths are being exaggerated



TRUTH: COVID deaths are most likely under-reported rather than exaggerated.

The majority of COVID declared deaths have positive swabs. A minority are recorded as COVID without a swab if the radiological picture or symptoms strongly suggest COVID in the absence of any other explanation and doing a post-death swab is undesirable / impractical.

This is in keeping with normal medical practice.



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MYTH: Doctors want to force people to be vaccinated



TRUTH: We want people to make their own minds up based on factual information, not myths.

Most countries will rely on education rather than dictation to convince the population.

However, it would be irresponsible of us not to highlight areas where we feel people are being misled - sometimes deliberately and dangerously.



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MYTH: The COVID vaccine ingredients are Haram



TRUTH: The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine contains no animal ingredients at all.

Declaring a product halal or haraam is a call for Islamic scholars who have studied on this for years. The simple presence of a particular ingredient is not the only factor taken into account.

Most previous vaccines, including the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, have been declared halal by the majority of scholarly bodies worldwide.



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MYTH: Vaccines contain aborted foetal cells



TRUTH: Vaccines do not contain foetal cells.

Some vaccines (NOT the Pfizer / Moderna COVID vaccines) originally used very special foetal cells to grow the virus many decades ago.

The original cells were the only option at the time. These cells are not present in current vaccines and have been declared acceptable to use by the majority of Islamic scholarly bodies worldwide.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: Vaccines are being used to chip and track the population



TRUTH: Vaccines do not contain any chips or trackers for surveillance.

Independent authorities across the world from countries that compete with each other have approved the vaccine and not found any microchips.

The truth is that there are far easier ways to track the population (mobile phones/ bank cards etc) than biological trackers.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: Vaccines are unsafe - that is why no pregnant women were in trials



TRUTH: Pregnant women & children are not usually included in initial trials.

The current COVID vaccines are not recommended for most children at this stage. The guidance for pregnant women is to make a decision based on risk. This does not mean it is unsafe in these groups.

It is reflective of them not being in the main trial groups and a sign of the safety protocols taken.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: Vaccines are unsafe - that is why no pregnant women were in trials



TRUTH: Pregnant women and children are not usually included in initial trials.

Data from the United States, where around 90,000 pregnant women have been vaccinated mainly with mRNA vaccines such as the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, have not raised any safety concerns.

The latest advice is that pregnant women should be offered the vaccines at the same time as the rest of the population, based on their age and clinical risk group.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: Pharmaceutical companies are all evil so we can't trust them



TRUTH: The pharmaceutical industry has sometimes acted unethically but this does not mean we should reject everything they do.

The acceptability of a technology is not based purely on the ethical or moral track record of the individual companies involved e.g. social media, food, cars etc.

We take painkillers, antibiotics and chemotherapy medicines from the same companies.



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MYTH: The vaccine was approved too quickly to be safe



TRUTH: The speed of approval was mainly due to cutting red tape rather than cutting corners.

There has been unprecedented worldwide scientific collaboration and funding to create the COVID vaccine. This global effort has allowed scientists to work at record speed, and complete years of work in months.



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MYTH: The vaccine may modify your DNA



TRUTH: There is no way that RNA can change the DNA of anyone.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID vaccine uses mRNA technology. The mRNA vaccine teaches our cells to make a protein that triggers a protective immune response. The mRNA is broken down soon after it enters the body.

mRNA never enters the nucleus of the cell, where our DNA is kept.



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MYTH: PCR is inaccurate and overestimating COVID infections



TRUTH: No test is 100% accurate but there is no evidence to suggest that the concerns regarding COVID infections and the severity of this disease are misplaced.

Whilst there are false positives and false negatives with all tests, data including the number of hospitalisations with symptoms of COVID and number of deaths give us a good indication of how serious the situation is.



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MYTH: The inventor of the PCR test said it was not made to detect diseases such as COVID



TRUTH: There is no evidence that Dr Kary Mullis, the inventor of the PCR process, ever said this.

The PCR process helps scientists to detect genetic material. If a sample contains the genetic material of the COVID virus then the test will be positive.

Dr Mullis died in August 2019, months before the first case of COVID was reported.



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MYTH: 99.97% recover from COVID, but 3% get major side effects from vaccine



TRUTH: These numbers are false. We should remember that over a million people have died from the virus and millions more are suffering long term complications.

The small risk of minimal and often short term side effects of the vaccine do not outweigh the risk of long term complications or death from COVID.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: 99.97% recover from COVID, but 3% get major side effects from vaccine



TRUTH: These numbers are misleading. The death rate is much higher in the older and more vulnerable population. Many individuals across all age groups suffer long term effects of COVID.

The small risk of minimal and often short term side effects of the vaccine do not outweigh the risk of long term complications or death from COVID.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: Wearing a mask is bad for your health



TRUTH: There is no evidence to show that wearing a mask is harmful, but there is evidence to show that it can protect.

We all have a role to play in reducing the spread of COVID. We must continue to practice social distancing, wearing masks and handwashing to help reduce the spread of COVID.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: We should just wait for herd immunity



TRUTH: The number of deaths that will occur before we possibly achieve herd immunity will be disastrous.

Herd immunity works if the majority of the population has had COVID.

Official data suggests over 2 million people in the UK have had COVID. To achieve herd immunity, the number of deaths would also increase dramatically and be disastrous for our country.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: If hospitals are so busy why are Nightingale hospitals empty?



TRUTH: The Nightingale “Hospitals” were set up as ITU and not with many other facilities. There’s no extra staff to run them at present.

Latest information suggests the NHS is struggling with the number of new hospitalisations due to COVID.

This is on top of the usual NHS functions that have had to be delayed e.g. elective surgery due to the pandemic.



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MYTH: A nurse took the COVID vaccine & died on camera



TRUTH: The nurse fainted. After recovering, she gave a press conference to say she has fainted previously when in pain.

The nurse recovered. The vaccines have been approved after analysis of safety data from clinical trials involving tens of thousands of patients.

Further data is now being collected from patients receiving the vaccine.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: There's no point getting vaccinated due to new COVID strains



TRUTH: There is currently no evidence to suggest that the vaccines will not protect against the new strains.

It is normal for viruses such as the flu virus to go through genetic changes.

Scientists are looking at the characteristics of the new strains. Small variations do not often affect the effectiveness of a vaccine.



MYTH: There's no point getting vaccinated due to new COVID strains



TRUTH: Latest research suggests that two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca vaccines are effective in protecting people from getting ill with the India variant.

The recent variants that have spread around that world are thought to be more transmissible than the early COVID-19 strains. We must all remain vigilant and ensure we protect ourselves and our loved ones.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: Vaccines contain alcohol & therefore are impermissible



TRUTH: The Oxford AZ Vaccine contains ethanol at an amount that is less than what is found in natural foods or bread.

Many scholars have deemed the Oxford AZ Vaccine to be permissible as the amount of ethanol is negligible.

The religious permissibility of any product is for scholars to decide, so please refer to those you trust.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: The COVID Vaccine contains Genetically Modified Organisms which are harmful to humans



TRUTH: The virus in the AZ COVID vaccine has been modified so it cannot multiply and cause disease in our bodies.

GMOs are commonly associated with food and agriculture and have been used in licensed medicines for a number of years.

In the AZ COVID vaccine, the virus has been altered to remove its normal genetic instruction. This has been replaced with instruction to help develop immunity to COVID.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: Vaccines contain pork or other animal derivatives



TRUTH: There are no pork or other animal ingredients in the current available vaccines.

Even in circumstances when there are impermissible ingredients in a vaccine, many renowned scholars have concluded that they are permissible if there are no alternative options and the data suggests that the vaccine is of benefit.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: The COVID vaccines can give you COVID



TRUTH: No. You cannot get COVID from the vaccine.

The COVID vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognise and fight the virus that causes COVID.

This process can cause side effects which are usually mild. The current vaccines cannot make you sick with COVID.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: COVID vaccines can make you infertile (unable to have children)



TRUTH: There is no evidence to suggest that the COVID vaccines cause infertility.

This myth started when a German epidemiologist suggested that the COVID vaccine would cause the body to make anti-Syncytin-1 antibodies. He admitted that there was no indication that this was the case.

A number of women who had the vaccine in the trial have since become pregnant.



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MYTH: Catching COVID after having the vaccine is proof they don't work



TRUTH: The immune system can take a number of days or weeks to generate an immune response before protection from the virus begins.

The COVID vaccine will reduce the chances of suffering from the serious complications of COVID.

No vaccine is 100% effective, so everyone should continue to take the recommended precautions to avoid infection.



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MYTH: You don't need vaccination if you already had COVID



TRUTH: We do not know how long protection remains after COVID infection, therefore having the vaccine is advised.

People infected with COVID are likely to be protected for some months but further research is required. These individuals could still transmit the virus to others.

The current advice is to wait 4 weeks after having COVID before having the vaccine.



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MYTH: You can choose which COVID vaccine you get



TRUTH: Almost no one will be offered a choice due to logistics and availability. The best vaccine is therefore the one you are offered.

All the available vaccines offer a high level of immunity. People should be assured that whichever vaccine they get has been approved by the MHRA and met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.



MYTH: If I decide not to take the vaccine, it does not affect others



TRUTH: Your decisions don't just impact you but affect everyone, especially the most vulnerable and sick.

You are more likely to suffer with long COVID and severe complications if you do not have the vaccine. This will add pressure to the health service and have an effect on people who are suffering from other illnesses. It will also impact on your close ones who have to care for you during this period.



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MYTH: I'm young & low risk so the COVID vaccine isn't for me



TRUTH: In the last few weeks, adults aged 18 - 64 have accounted for 40% of daily COVID admissions to hospital.

Although the risk is higher with age and comorbidities, COVID can affect people of any age. COVID can cause long term complications and death. The vaccine is designed to reduce the risk of these disastrous consequences.



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MYTH: Only the really sick & elderly are dying from COVID



TRUTH: This is untrue and unethical.

The average age in intensive care units is just over 60 years old. Pre-existing conditions that make one high risk can be as simple as asthma, diabetes or being overweight.

All life is precious regardless of age or past medical history. To suggest otherwise is troubling and unislamic.



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MYTH: There is no liability for anyone if the vaccines have problems



TRUTH: The manufacturers are not exempt from all liabilities.

To encourage pharmaceutical companies to produce COVID vaccines without incurring substantial financial loss, the Government has given them immunity from civil liability and included the vaccines in the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme.

The companies still have obligations they need to fulfil. This is not a new concept. Many common vaccines already fall under this scheme.



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MYTH: There are health professionals who object to the COVID vaccine



TRUTH: The majority of health professionals, public health experts and scientists are promoting the COVID vaccines.

Scientists from around the world have come together to develop safe COVID vaccines that will help to save thousands of lives.

As with any profession, there will be a fringe minority who disagree with the consensus view. The arguments are rarely based on evidence.



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MYTH: Vaccines should be 100% safe before being released to the public



TRUTH: Vaccines are a safe way to prevent vaccine preventable diseases but no medication is 100% safe.

Vaccines are held to a higher standard than many other medications but it is important to not create impossible goals for treatments.

There are not many things in life that are 100% safe.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: People are dying from the COVID-19 vaccines



TRUTH: Some people will die after having a COVID vaccine. This does not mean it was the vaccine that caused the death.

If 10 million people are vaccinated and the vaccine has no side effects whatsoever, 14,000 can still be expected to die from entirely unrelated causes.

The only way to determine if vaccines have serious side effects is by looking at the data from many vaccinated people and comparing them to what can normally be expected from people of that age group.



BRITISH ISLAMIC
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MYTH: People are dying from the COVID-19 vaccines



TRUTH: There have been a small number of deaths reported following the administration of COVID-19 vaccines.

Vaccination and surveillance of large populations means that some people will experience a new illness or event following the vaccine. In many cases, this may be by chance.

The expected benefits of the vaccines in prevention of COVID and serious complications associated with COVID outweigh the risks. Guidance has been updated to ensure patients are offered the appropriate vaccines based on their risk profile.



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