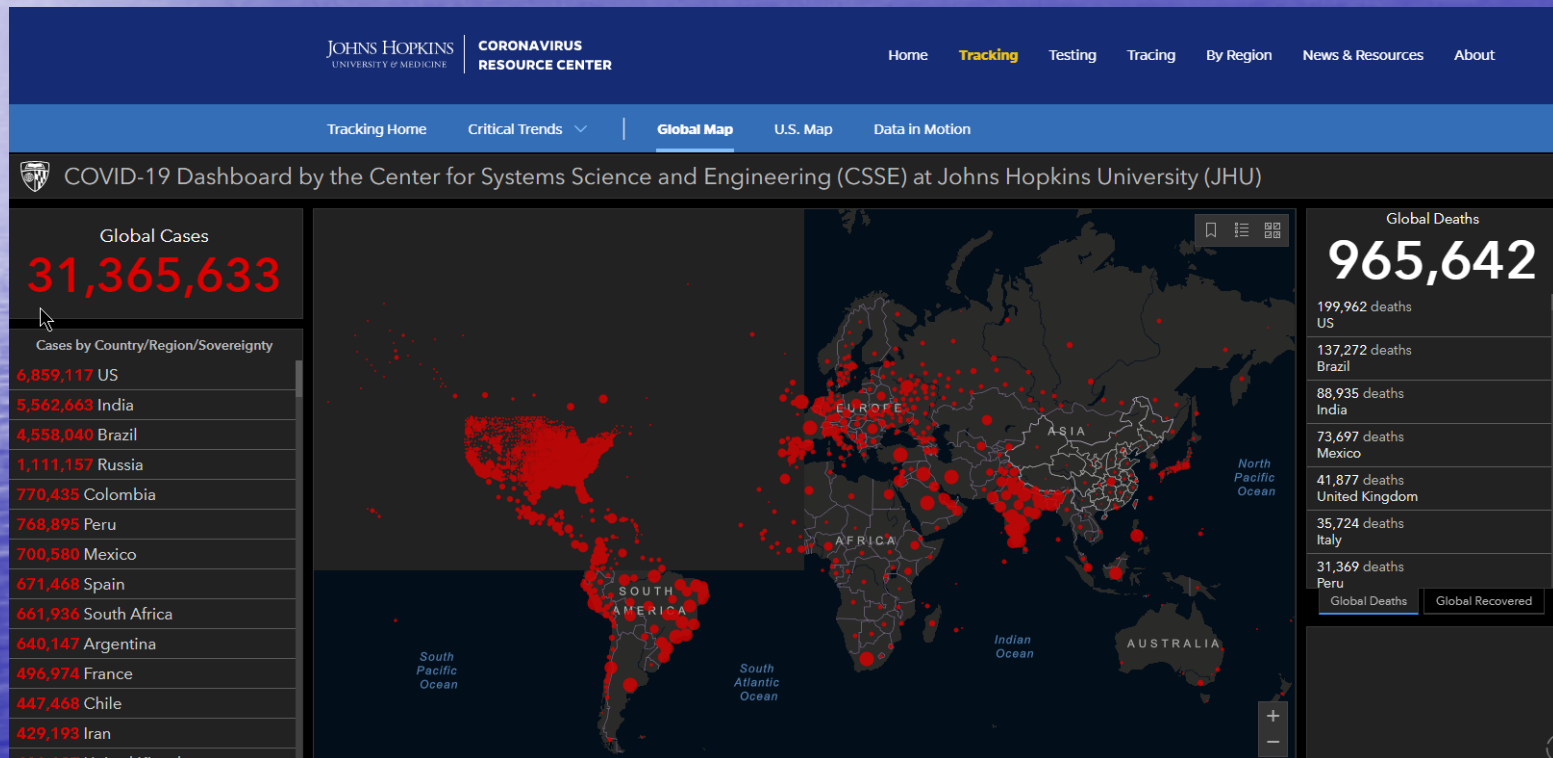


# Tracking the Media Tracking the Coronavirus: Quackery, Treatments and U-Turns

Brant Houston  
Knight Chair in Investigative Reporting  
University of Illinois  
[brant.houston@gmail.com](mailto:brant.houston@gmail.com)

# Johns Hopkins Covid Map



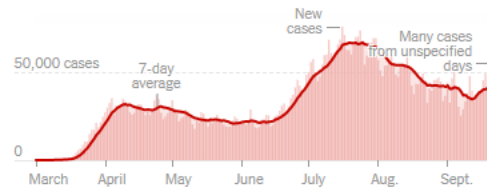
# NY Times Covid-19 Map and Count

WORLD COUNTRIES | U.S.A. STATES COLLEGES

## Covid in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count

By The New York Times Updated September 22, 2020, 8:01 A.M. E.T.

[Leer en español](#)



	TOTAL REPORTED	ON SEPT. 21	14-DAY CHANGE
Cases	6.8 million+	54,874	+7% →
Deaths	199,789	428	-4% ↔

■ Day with data reporting anomaly.  
Includes confirmed and probable cases where available. 14-day change trends use 7-day averages.

- Map
- Cases by state
- Hot spots
- Clusters
- Latest news »

At least 428 new coronavirus deaths and 54,874 new cases were reported in the United States on Sept. 21. Over the past week, there have been an average of 41,812 cases per day, an increase of 7 percent from the average two weeks earlier.



# Illinois Public Health 4379

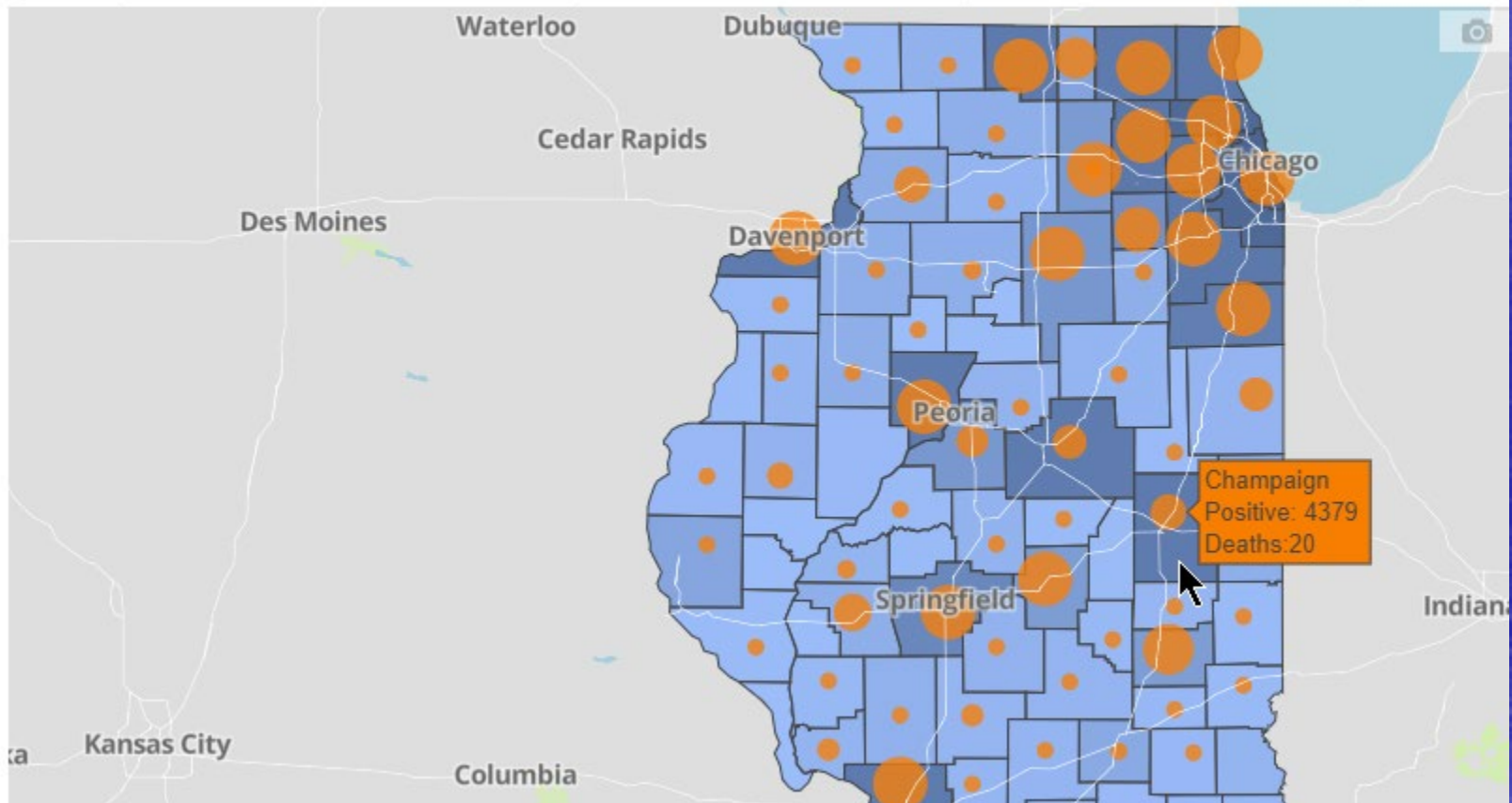
## COVID-19 Illinois Positive Cases

Totals

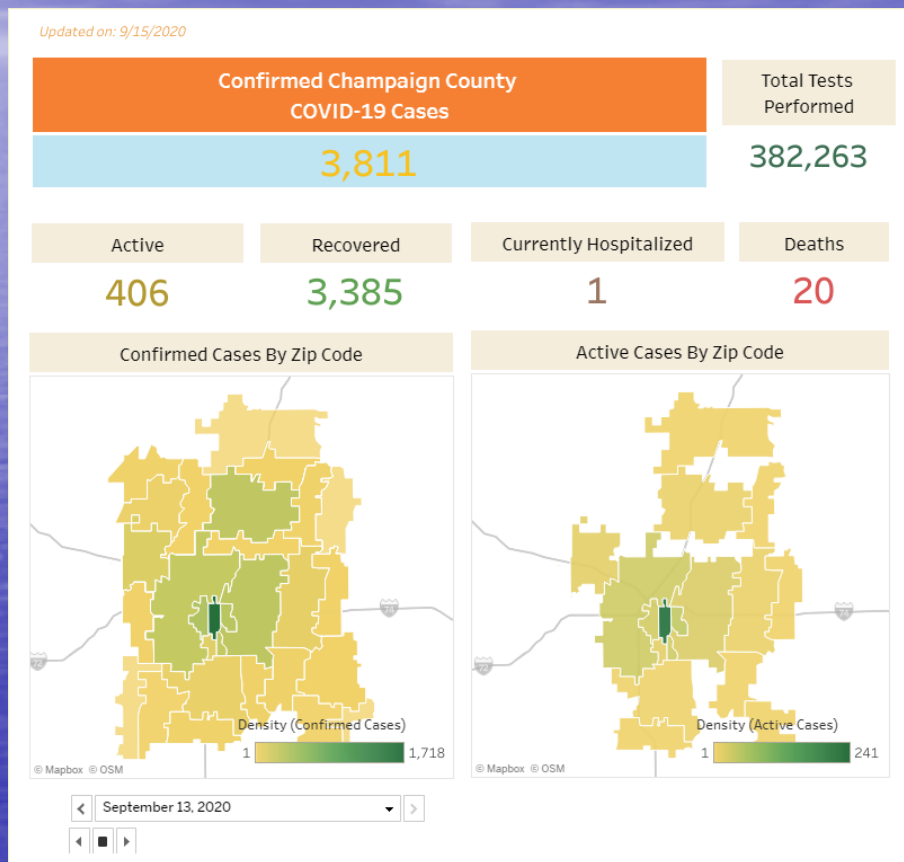
Confirmed Rate Per Population

Deaths Rate Per Population

Tested Rate Per Population



# County Dashboard – Sept 14



<https://www.c-uphd.org/champaign-urbana-illinois-coronavirus-information.html>

# CUPHD – Sept. 22

Updated on: 9/22/2020

Confirmed Champaign County  
COVID-19 Cases

4,336

Total Tests  
Performed

446,570

Active

327

Recovered

3,989

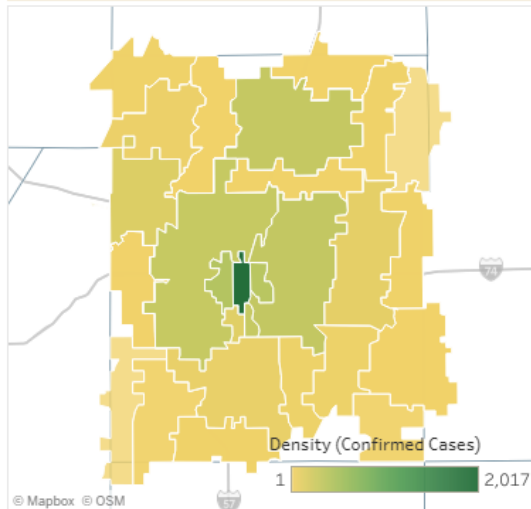
Currently Hospitalized

4

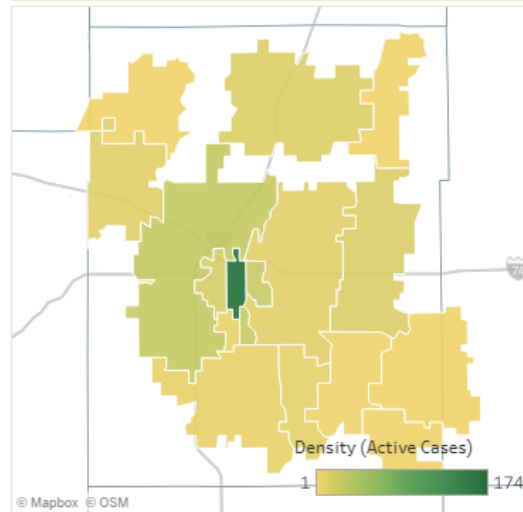
Deaths

20

Confirmed Cases By Zip Code



Active Cases By Zip Code



# University of Illinois

## Shield Testing Data

Results for University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Direct linking to this site will not work. To share please use <https://go.illinois.edu/COVIDTestingData>

View this webpage for more explanation of the data displayed in the dashboard, <https://covid19.illinois.edu/on-campus-covid-19-testing-data-dashboard/>

Total Test Results

# 352,819

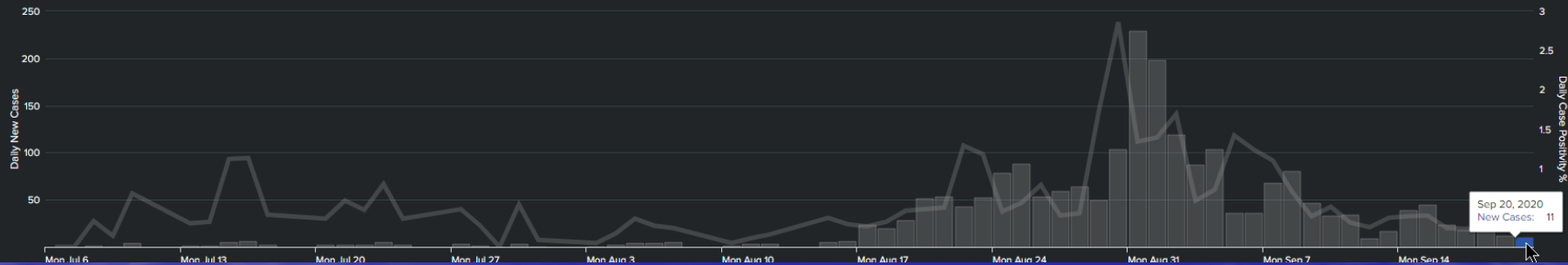
Past 7-Day Case Positivity Rate

# 0.31 %

Case positivity is unique new cases/total number of test results.

Unique New Cases

Unique New Cases are the first time an individual is detected COVID-19 positive by the SHIELD saliva test





# Cumulative Cases in the County



Public Health   Housing   Justice   Education   Public Funds   Apps, Maps and Visualization   Freedom of Information Guides

## COVID-19 TIPS

Champaign County as of Sept. 21 while county health department reports 4,299 on Sept 21, 80 fewer cases than the state because of lag time in county investigatic

## Champaign County Covid-19 Cases at 4,379 on 9-21-2020



This is based on initial reports and numbers released by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Champaign-Urbana Public Health Department. Numbers sometimes vary because of lag time in county reporting.

Chart: Brant Houston • Source: CU-CitizenAccess.org • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)



# Media Coverage



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojW802yW2RY>

# Trump and Light



# Trump and Hydroxchlorine





# “Miracle Mineral Solution.”


PHYSICIAN'S WEEKLY

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VISIT  
physiciansweekly.com/covid19  
for the latest updates on the pandemic,  
including breaking news, expert-written features  
and editorials, patient education, and more!

COVID-19  
RESOURCE CENTER



Covid-19: FDA's Operation Quack Hack Targets Bogus Treatments and Cures

May 8, 2020

**Toll thus far: 42 warning letters, and one injunction**

WASHINGTON — As part of the FDA's crack-down on bogus Covid-19 cures, a U.S. District Court Judge issued a temporary restraining order to bar the Genesis II Church of Health and Healing, along with four individuals affiliated with the church, from marketing a bleach product sold as “Miracle Mineral Solution.”

The FDA, which was joined by the Federal Trade Commission in pursuing the action, said in a release that “U.S. District Judge Kathleen M. Williams for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, entered the temporary restraining order against Genesis and the individual defendants Mark Grenon, Joseph Grenon, Jordan Grenon, and Jonathan Grenon until May 1st, 2020.”

<https://www.physiciansweekly.com/covid-19-fdas-operation-quack-hack-targets-bogus-treatments-and-cures/>



# "Miracle Mineral Solution."

Morning Mix

## Leader of fake church peddling bleach as covid-19 cure sought Trump's support. Instead, he got federal charges.



The Food and Drug Administration issued this photo as part of its warning against the "Miracle Mineral Solution" sold by "Genesis II Church of Health and Healing" in 2019, saying: "If you're drinking 'Miracle' or 'Master' Mineral Solution or other sodium chlorite products, stop now. The FDA has received many reports that these products, sold online as treatments, have made consumers sick." (FDA)

By Meagan Flynn

July 9, 2020 at 4:32 a.m. CDT

+ Add to list

All blood donations are tested for COVID-19 antibodies.

SCHEDULE NOW

American Red Cross

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/07/09/fake-coronavirus-cure-bleach/>

# Oleandrin at the White House

The New York Times

## *Drug Pitched to Trump for Covid-19 Comes From a Deadly Plant*

The chief executive of My Pillow, a Trump donor, claims oleandrin is a miracle cure for Covid-19. But no studies have shown that it is safe or effective, and the shrub it's derived from is poisonous.



<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/20/health/covid-oleandrin-trump-mypillow.html>

# Hydroxychloroquine facts

The image is a screenshot of a news article from USA Today. At the top left is the USA Today logo. The top navigation bar includes links for 'ELECTIONS 2020 Register to vote', 'CORONAVIRUS NUMBERS Virus numbers by state', and 'NEWS HAPPENS AT NIGHT, TOO'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with categories: News, Sports, Entertainment, Life, Money, Tech, Travel, and Opinion. The main article content features a 'FACT CHECK' label, a mouse cursor pointing to it, and a large headline: 'Fact check: Hydroxychloroquine has not worked in treating COVID-19, studies show'. The author is listed as 'Miriam Fauzia USA TODAY'. Below the author name is the publication and update information: 'Published 1:09 p.m. ET Jul. 21, 2020 | Updated 2:26 p.m. ET Jul. 21, 2020'. At the bottom of the article are icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email.

USA TODAY

ELECTIONS 2020  
Register to vote 🗳️

CORONAVIRUS NUMBERS  
Virus numbers by state

NEWS HAPPENS AT NIGHT, TOO  
🌙 + 📺 = 😊

[ News ] Sports Entertainment Life Money Tech Travel Opinion

**FACT CHECK**

**Fact check: Hydroxychloroquine has not worked in treating COVID-19, studies show**

**Miriam Fauzia** USA TODAY

Published 1:09 p.m. ET Jul. 21, 2020 | Updated 2:26 p.m. ET Jul. 21, 2020

📘 🐦 ✉️

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/07/21/fact-check-hydroxychloroquine-hasnt-helped-covid-19-studies-show/5407547002/>



# Hydroxychloroquine facts

President Donald Trump took to Twitter on March 21 to declare hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin as the "biggest game changers in the history of medicine."

Medical experts and policymakers, desperate to turn the pandemic's tide and propelled by hype, jumped on the bandwagon. The FDA approved emergency use of the drug in late March, and many states and countries kickstarted their own clinical trials. Among them was the World Health Organization with its Solidarity Trial.



# Hydroxychloroquine facts

The early evidence was found to be flawed. On March 23, three statisticians published a review of the French study and found it overstated hydroxychloroquine's benefit by citing Chinese sources that lacked real evidence.

# Quackwatch



**Quackwatch**

Your Guide to Quackery, Health Fraud, and Intelligent Decisions

[Navigation Guide](#) [Newsletter](#) [Discussion List](#) [What's New](#)

## Search

covid

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All Authors



Sort Results By



Found 13 Result(s)

### COVID-19 Schemes, Scams, and Misinformation

Thirty years ago, as AIDS and chronic fatigue syndrome came to national attention, John Renner, M.D. observed that most of the quack cancer clinics began offering the same "treatments" for AIDS and chronic fatigue syndrome—a tendency he coined "rascal rollover." Today, dubious pitchmen have "rolled" into COVID-19. Here's a handy compilation of advice, enforcement actions, ...

[+ Show/Hide Full Content](#)

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### Federal Judge Blocks Sale of Fake COVID-19 Treatment

A federal district judge has ordered Ray L. Nannis, D.C., to stop marketing a homeopathic "treatment" for COVID-19. The civil complaint (show below) states: Nannis, who operates

<https://quackwatch.org/?s& sf s=covid>

# Fact Checkers



 **FACTCHECK.ORG**<sup>®</sup> *A Project of The Annenberg Public Policy Cent*

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ASK SCIENCE CHECK › FEATURED POSTS › SCICHECK

## Does Vitamin D Protect Against COVID-19?

*By Jessica McDonald*

*Posted on June 8, 2020*

**Q: Does vitamin D help protect against COVID-19?**

**A:** Some scientists have hypothesized vitamin D might be helpful, but there is no direct evidence that vitamin D can prevent COVID-19 or lessen disease severity. Nevertheless, it should be part of a healthy lifestyle.

**FULL QUESTION**

Could vitamin D help decrease the chance of covid 19?

**FULL ANSWER**

As the coronavirus has spread around the globe, some scientists have proposed that vitamin D could help with COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

<https://www.factcheck.org/2020/06/does-vitamin-d-protect-against-covid-19/>

# Media Coverage

recode



Task Force on March 19. | Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

## What went wrong with the media's coronavirus coverage?

And can we do better?

By **Peter Kafka** | Apr 13, 2020, 7:10am EDT

f   SHARE

The coronavirus pandemic has crippled America. So far, the virus has killed more than 20,000 people in the United States and has sickened more than 500,000 people.

It's clear now that the US government was woefully unprepared for the pandemic, and that's been reflected in its messaging to the public since the start.

<https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/4/13/21214114/media-coronavirus-pandemic-coverage-cdc-should-you-wear-masks>



# Media Coverage

Much of the mainstream media amplified this slow and muddled reaction to the rapidly spreading virus. Since alarming reports about Covid-19 began to emerge from China in January, the media often provided information to Americans that later proved to be wrong, or at least inadequate.

<https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/4/13/21214114/media-coronavirus-pandemic-coverage-cdc-should-you-wear-masks>

# Media Coverage

For instance: While President Trump has been correctly pilloried for describing the coronavirus as less dangerous than the flu, that message was commonplace in mainstream media outlets throughout February. And journalists — including my colleagues at Vox — were dutifully repeating exhortations from public health officials not to wear masks for much of 2020.

<https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/4/13/21214114/media-coronavirus-pandemic-coverage-cdc-should-you-wear-masks>

# CDC Back Tracks -Masks

Advertisement

Home > Personal Finance

## U.S. health officials say Americans shouldn't wear face masks to prevent coronavirus — here are 3 other reasons not to wear them

Published: March 2, 2020 at 12:47 p.m. ET

By [Elisabeth Buchwald](#)

Most people don't use face masks correctly, a Johns Hopkins public health expert told MarketWatch

188

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-cdc-says-americans-dont-have-to-wear-facemasks-because-of-coronavirus-2020-01-30>



# CDC Back Tracks on Masks

9 (COVID-19)



**WEAR A MASK. PROTECT OTHERS.**

Work & School ▾    Healthcare Workers & Labs ▾    Health Depts ▾    Cases & Data ▾    More ▾

YOUR HEALTH 

## Use of Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

Updated June 28, 2020    Languages ▾    Print        



<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>



# WHO Back Tracks on asymptomatic spread



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rfqOi8Qh-Q>

# Asymptomatic spread



## Coronavirus

COVID-19 Information and Updates

For Patients

For Health Professionals

News

UC Davis Health / Coronavirus / [FAQs for Health Professionals](#)

## COVID-19 FAQs for health professionals

Updated Aug. 28, 2020

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic involves information that is continually evolving and being updated as public health officials and scientists collect more data and develop an understanding of the virus. Health professionals should check this page and other respected websites for the latest information.

What do we know about how COVID-19 is spread? ▾

[Can COVID-19 be spread by asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic exposure?](#) ▾

A [recent summary](#) of the latest data by the CDC shows that about two-thirds of the COVID-19 transmissions in the U.S. come from people not showing symptoms – either because their cases are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. [According to the CDC](#), this “underscores the importance of social distancing, including the avoidance of congregate settings, to reduce COVID-19 spread.”

# CDC Back Tracks

PEOPLE.COM > HEALTH

## CDC Director Backtracks on Changes to Coronavirus Testing Guidelines After Widespread Criticism

The health agency had changed its guidance to say that asymptomatic people who have been exposed to the virus do not necessarily need get tested

By [Julie Mazziotta](#) | August 27, 2020 04:02 PM

<https://people.com/health/cdc-director-backtracks-coronavirus-testing-change-after-criticism/>



# CDC Back Tracks

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Brant houston ▾

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## CDC Removes Guidelines Saying Coronavirus Can Spread From Tiny Air Particles

Health agency removed the language, which had gone up on its website, saying it had posted a draft version of proposed changes in error



Ad closed by Google

Aerosol and respiratory viruses experts have been arguing for months that Covid-19 is an airborne virus. A subway station in Prague.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-can-spread-by-tiny-air-particles-cdc-now-says-11600700364>



# CDC Back Tracks

BUSINESS  
INSIDER

## CDC backtracks and now emphatically supports reopening schools after criticism from Trump

insider@insider.com (John Haltiwanger) · 7/24/2020



<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/cdc-backtracks-and-now-emphatically-supports-reopening-schools-after-criticism-from-trump/ar-BB179oJv>

# CDC Back Tracks

## CDC Backtracks On '3 Month Window Of Immunity' Claim



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### TRENDING

1. Buy-now, pa  
booming
2. 'Ripped it in  
personal fin
3. 7 bank disco  
that make li
4. 'It's time to c

<https://money.yahoo.com/cdc-says-covid-19-survivors-132320747.html>

# FDA Home Page

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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### Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

COVID-19-Related Guidance Documents for Industry, FDA Staff, and Other Stakeholders

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Innovation to Respond to COVID-19

COVID-19 Educational Resources

Donate COVID-19 Plasma

Multilingual COVID-19 Resources

**!** Safety warning: FDA Updates on Hand Sanitizers Consumers Should Not Use

### On this page:

- Latest COVID-19 News from FDA
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Emergency Use Authorizations and Guidances
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Popular Topics
- FDA Regulated Products and COVID-19
- Report a Problem
- Contact FDA

### Donate COVID-19 Plasma

If you have fully recovered from COVID-19, you may be able to help patients currently fighting the infection by donating your plasma.

### Medical Devices (PDF) | Therapeutics (PDF)

How FDA facilitates development and availability of medical devices and therapeutics to combat COVID-19.

### Resources for Health Professionals

Key resources for health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/counterterrorism-and-emerging-threats/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>



# FDA Emergency Use

Response / Counterterrorism and Emerging Threats / Medical Countermeasures Initiative (MCMi) / MCM Legal, Regulatory and Policy Framework / Emergency Use Authorization


## Emergency Use Authorization

*Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) information, and list of all current EUAs*

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**MCM Legal, Regulatory and Policy Framework**

- MCM-Related Legal and Policy Presentations, Publications and Q&As
- MCM Emergency Use Authorities
- MCM-Related Counterterrorism Legislation
- State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Public Health Preparedness
- MCM-Related Cooperative Arrangements



Content c  
09/21/202

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-legal-regulatory-and-policy-framework/emergency-use-authorization>



# FDA backs off

## FDA cautions against use of hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine for COVID-19 outside of the hospital setting or a clinical trial due to risk of heart rhythm problems

*Does not affect FDA-approved uses for malaria, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis*

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**July 1, 2020 Update:** A summary of the FDA review of safety issues with the use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine to treat hospitalized patients with COVID-19 is now available. This includes reports of serious heart rhythm problems and other safety issues, including blood and lymph system disorders, kidney injuries, and liver problems and failure.

<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-cautions-against-use-hydroxychloroquine-or-chloroquine-covid-19-outside-hospital-setting-or>

# VA Study on Hydroxychloroquine

## More deaths, no benefit from malaria drug in VA virus study

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE April 21, 2020



<https://apnews.com/a5077c7227b8eb8b0dc23423c0bbe2b2>

# Hydroxychloroquine facts

This ineffectiveness would arise regularly in later research efforts. Last month, RECOVERY, a large British clinical trial investigating hydroxychloroquine treatment in hospitalized patients, found no significant difference in mortality after 28 days, or hospital outcomes between patients given the drug and those not.

# Hydroxychloroquine facts

Considering the adverse effects of hydroxychloroquine intake, it has the potential to put lives at risk of severe heart problems and other issues, according to the FDA.



# Hydroxychloroquine facts

Considering the adverse effects of hydroxychloroquine intake, it has the potential to put lives at risk of severe heart problems and other issues, according to the FDA.

# FDA backs off

**Modern Healthcare**

NEWS    INSIGHTS    TRANSFORMATION    DATA/LISTS    OP-ED    AWARDS    EVENTS    LISTEN    M

Home > Government

September 02, 2020 02:55 PM

## Second Trump appointee out at FDA amid credibility concerns

Associated Press

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<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/government/second-trump-appointee-out-fda-amid-credibility-concerns>

# FDA enforcement declines



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STEPHAN SCHMITZ/FOLIOART

## Exclusive: FDA enforcement actions plummet under Trump

By Charles Piller | Jul. 2, 2019 , 8:00 AM

From monitoring clinical trials and approving medicines and vaccines, to ensuring the safety of blood transfusions, medical devices, groceries, and more, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is one of the nation's most vital watchdogs. By several measures, however, FDA's compliance and enforcement actions have plummeted since President Donald Trump took office, *Science* has found.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/07/exclusive-fda-enforcement-actions-plummet-under-trump>



# FTC Actions



The screenshot shows the top portion of the FTC's Consumer Information website. At the top left is the FTC seal, followed by the text "FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION" and "Consumer Information". Below this is a navigation bar with five categories: "MONEY & CREDIT", "HOMES & MORTGAGES", "HEALTH & FITNESS", "JOBS & MAKING MONEY", and "PRIVACY, IDENTITY ONLINE SECURITY". The main content area features a breadcrumb trail "Home > Blog > Cracking down on fake COVID-19 cures" and a large heading "Cracking down on fake COVID-19 cures". Below the heading are social media share icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The post is dated "July 31, 2020" and written by "Jabari Cook, Intern, Division of Consumer & Business Education, FTC". The introductory text of the post discusses the FTC's announcement of a new case against two companies, Golden Sunrise Nutraceutical, Inc. and Golden Sunrise Pharmaceutical, Inc., for making false promises about COVID-19 cures.

Home > Blog > Cracking down on fake COVID-19 cures

## Cracking down on fake COVID-19 cures

Share this page   

July 31, 2020  
by Jabari Cook  
Intern, Division of Consumer & Business Education, FTC

If you or a loved one has COVID-19, you might feel hopeful about products that guarantee you the treatment or cure you're looking for. But if those products don't work as advertised, then you could end up paying lots of money for false promises. Today, the FTC announced a new case against two companies, — Golden Sunrise Nutraceutical, Inc., Golden Sunrise Pharmaceutical, Inc. — and members of their leadership — Huu Tieu and Stephen Meis — for allegedly making promises like these.

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/07/cracking-down-fake-covid-19-cures>

# A wave of fake treatments

Misinformation about COVID-19 is spreading online, including many fake cures or treatments for the disease.

At least seven companies have been warned by the Food and Drug Administration for fraudulent products to treat COVID-19.

The products cited in these warning letters include teas, essential oils, tinctures, and colloidal silver.

<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/no-products-can-cure-covid-19>

# A wave of fake treatments

Some claims, like don't eat ice cream, are just strange, with no basis in reality.

Others, such as eat more garlic, aren't harmful by themselves — unless they keep you from following medical advice that actually has scientific evidence to back it up.

But some products can be harmful, such as the “miracle mineral supplement,” or MMS. This contains chlorine dioxide, a powerful bleaching agent, which can cause serious side effects, like severe vomiting and



# A wave of fake treatments

But some products can be harmful, such as the “miracle mineral supplement,” or MMS. This contains chlorine dioxide, a powerful bleaching agent, which can cause serious side effects, like severe vomiting and diarrhea.

The Daily Mail reported that at least 44 people in Iran died from alcohol poisoning after drinking bootleg booze, thinking it would slow the spread of the virus.

# QAnon and Coronavirus

## BBC Trending

### How Covid-19 myths are merging with the QAnon conspiracy theory



By Marianna Spring and Mike Wendling  
BBC Anti-disinformation unit

3 September 2020



<https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-53997203>