

# Article – Disinformation: how to recognise and tackle Covid-19 myths



## **What is the EU doing to tackle disinformation?**

To support factual and reliable information, there is a joint [EU page about Europe's response to the virus](#), which will soon include special information to correct common myths linked to the outbreak.

In addition, experts and politicians from the EU and its member states regularly hold video conferences to discuss disinformation and share methods to inform people about the risks, and how to address them. There is also pressure on online platforms to take [action against online scams](#).

## **Why do people intentionally put out false information?**

Some people do it for profit. It could be to sell products that do not work or to attract more visitors to their webpages, increasing income from ads.

According to a [report by the EU's special anti-disinformation team](#), some false claims have originated from specific political forces, including the US "alt" right, China and Russia. In these cases, the aim is political, to undermine the European Union or to create political shifts.

However, many people spreading disinformation do so, because they believe it, without intending harm.

[Discover the truth behind many popular corona myths in this blog](#)

## **Is disinformation about Covid-19 really that dangerous?**

At a time when many people are worried and getting shocking news, it is more difficult to remain calm and fact-check as needed.

In the past, misinformation about vaccines led parents to opt out of vaccinating their children against measles and other dangerous diseases, leading to an explosion in new measles cases.

Even if people don't believe the misinformation, it may undermine the concepts of truth and expertise, so that a spontaneous tweet by someone without a clue is valued as much as a thorough analysis by an expert.

## **What can I do to prevent the spread of disinformation?**

Disinformation depends on people believing it and sharing. And it is easy to be fooled. To make sure you do not spread disinformation, be extra careful when sharing news that elicits a strong reaction or that seems too good or too bad to be true. An easy first check is to search the internet to see if more than one reliable source is reporting about the same thing.

If you are not sure, [there are many fact-checking guides out there](#).

## **What can I do if I see or hear someone share disinformation?**

You can report disinformation to the social media platform where you found it. Many social media companies have committed to work against coronavirus-related disinformation.

Also, talk to the person spreading it: it was probably unintentional. Researchers say that the best way to convince people who believe in conspiracy theories is to show empathy, appeal to the person's critical thinking and avoid ridiculing them.