

## Introduction to Rooted In Trust

Rooted in Trust (RiT) is an Internews project supporting humanitarian and public health agencies in tackling rumors and misinformation about COVID-19. The first stage (RiT1) ran from October 2020 to February 2021 with over 2,774 rumors collected in Lebanon. (1) The project was re-launched in September 2021 and will run until end of 2022.

In this bulletin, Internews examines common rumors found on social media in Lebanon between 16 and 31 January 2022. During this period, 35 rumors were collected from publicly accessible Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as some private groups and accounts that have a relatively high user engagement. Three unique rumors were selected for this bulletin which fall under the recurring themes of symptoms and transmission, testing and variants, and treatment and cure.



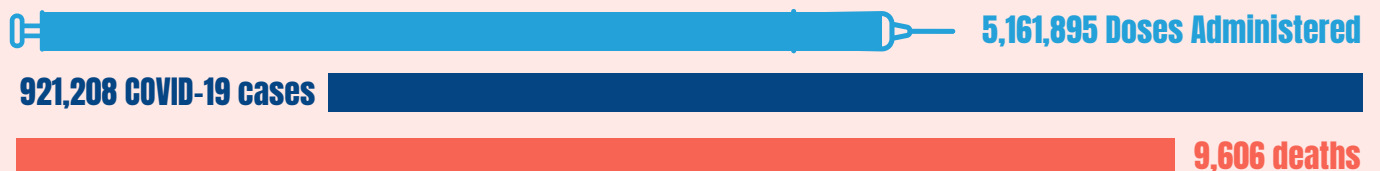
**2,774**  
Rumors collected

## Sources



## COVID-19 Situation in Lebanon

As of 31 January 2022, there have been 921,208 COVID-19 cases in Lebanon and 9606 deaths according to WHO, with the virus spreading particularly among younger age groups such as the 20- to 29-year-olds. 5,161,895 vaccine doses have been administered. (2) Almost 40% of the country's population over 12 years of age has received a second dose while only 30% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon have received at least one vaccine dose. (3) Lebanon remains at Level 4 of community transmission, meaning that high vigilance continues to be recommended with a focus on adhering to public health and social measures and encouraging greater vaccine uptake. (4)



## Important Numbers and Helplines:

- MOPH Hotlines: Corona **1787** | Vaccine **1214** (both free)
- COVID-19 call center **01-594459**
- Airport Quarantine Section **01-629352**
- Preventive Medicine Center **01-843769** | **01-830300**
- Epidemiological Surveillance Unit **01-614194** | **01-614196**
- WHO Lebanon **01-612970/1/2**

## PRACTICAL RESOURCES

- [WHO dashboard](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 page](#)
- [Protect yourself \(English/Arabic\)](#)
- [Q&A \(English/Arabic\)](#)
- [WHO Lebanon website](#)



**1787** Corona  
**1214** Vaccine



# RUMOR #1

"In my personal opinion, I don't think there is a need for quarantine to be more than 5 days long. After 5 days one can return to normal while wearing a mask, because there is a small possibility that Corona goes away, becomes without symptoms or only with very light coughing from time to time."

*-- Shared on Twitter and WhatsApp with more than 1000 members and 50 likes in Arabic.*



### Fact Checking:

- In December, the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shortened the recommended time for isolation to 5 days, followed by 5 days of wearing a mask when around others to minimize the risk of transmission. However, the MoPH in Lebanon has yet to adopt these measures due to the differences in the health contexts of each country. (5)
- According to WHO, there is no long-term immunity for COVID-19 after contacting it. (6)
- Researchers at John Hopkins University found that testing people for COVID-19 too early following infection is likely to result in a false negative test. Tests may show an early negative result but subsequently report positive after a few days, and the individual may be contagious even at the time of a negative result. (7)

## Recommendations



- The de-politicization of the COVID-19 response remains key to ensure social cohesion amidst this crisis. Partners must collectively advocate through the RCCE platform to relevant
- COVID-19 and health misinformation can still represent a serious trigger in social tensions, especially within the current landscape of unequal distribution of vaccines among host communities
- Partners may set as a priority to allow members of the community to express their fears and concerns on the current socio-economic uncertainty while answering any pressing questions that can help them



# RUMOR #2

"You don't have to worry about doing the PCR test anymore, just do a BBQ with meat, if you smell it then you're negative and if not then you're positive. This way you can also find out if your neighbors have Covid too."

-- Shared on Twitter with more than 100 likes and 20 shares, in Arabic



### Fact Checking:

- Symptoms of COVID-19 can vary from person to person. The most common ones are fever, cough, tiredness, and change in or loss of taste or smell. However, asymptomatic infection is also common, as is infection that does not affect the senses of taste and smell. (9)
- Asymptomatic people can still transmit the virus, so regular testing and taking precautions – both in day-to-day life and following potential exposure to the virus – remain critical to slow down the spread of the virus. (10)

## Recommendations



- In many cases, COVID-19 can be entirely asymptomatic. Even if the infection doesn't cause serious symptoms, it should still be taken seriously because of the risk of infecting others who may experience severe infection.
- Individuals who have been exposed to the virus should follow MoPH-recommended isolation measures to prevent harming those around them. For those unable to self-isolate due to overcrowded living conditions, it is important for those around you to maintain their distance, wear masks at all times, and continue washing hands frequently throughout the day.
- In some cases, the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 may be similar, so it is difficult to diagnose based on symptoms alone. PCR testing is the only accurate indication of COVID-19 infection.
  - In order to find the closest PCR testing center check the MoPH list (<https://www.moph.gov.lb/en/Pages/127/29152/hospitals-rt-pcr->)





# RUMOR #3

"Health officials had warned against using the drug Ivermectin in the treatment of Covid, although small doses of it were approved to be used in the treatment of some human conditions. Anti-Corona activists and conspiracy theorists have been promoting the drug as an alternative."



-- Shared on Twitter and blogs with more than 5 re-shares in Arabic



## Fact Checking:

- Ivermectin is ineffective in treatment of COVID-19. It is only used for the treatment of infections caused by some parasitic worms, head lice and skin conditions like rosacea.
- No scientific data shows that ivermectin is effective in treatment or prevention of COVID-19.
- The misuse of any medication can have serious long-term effects on one's health.
- COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Antibiotics, which are usually used to treat bacterial infections, would not be effective in treating COVID-19 or any other viral infection. (11)

- If you identify any COVID-19 symptoms, you should talk to your doctor or nurse or to the community health workers in your area. They will tell you what is safer for you to take to treat these symptoms.
- If any medication is found effective and safe to use, WHO and MoPH will recommend its usage through their platforms and they will also inform your health care providers. If you want to know more about the available medicines safe to treat COVID-19 symptoms, please call the Preventive Medicine Center at **01-843769 | 01-830300**
- Pharmacists in our communities should not sell any medications without the proper prescriptions or recommendations from health professionals. People should not be buying medications without the proper prescriptions from health care workers. Self-medication is dangerous for everyone and even more for people with underlying conditions and chronic disease.
- The best way to protect ourselves from severe disease if infected with COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. Vaccines have proven to provide long-term immunity against severe COVID-19 infection, as opposed to short term symptom relief which certain drugs may provide.

## Sources:

1. [https://internews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/RiT\\_Findings\\_Recommendations\\_Lebanon-English.pdf](https://internews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/RiT_Findings_Recommendations_Lebanon-English.pdf)
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