COVID-19 and “Alternative” Treatments

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COVID-19 and Alternative Treatments: What You Need To Know  
COVID-19 cell  
Last Updated: June 2022  
  
Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses in people. However, three coronaviruses have caused more serious human disease. One causes severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS); another causes Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS); and the third causes COVID-19. The virus that causes COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2.  
  
Some people have sought alternative remedies to prevent or to treat COVID-19. Some of these purported remedies include teas, essential oils, tinctures, herbal therapies such as oleander/oleandrin, and silver products such as colloidal silver. The Office of Dietary Supplements at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has detailed fact sheets for consumers (in English and Spanish) and health professionals about specific dietary supplements and COVID-19. But there is no scientific evidence that any of these alternative remedies can prevent or cure COVID-19. In fact, some of them may not be safe to consume. It s important to understand that although many herbal or dietary supplements (and some prescription drugs) come from natural sources, natural does not always mean that a product is a safer or better option for your health. For tips on how to find accurate, reliable information about health, visit our Know the Science resources.  
  
Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home. If you are worried about your symptoms, the Coronavirus Self-Checker can assist in the decision to seek care.  
  
COVID-19 vaccination helps protect people from getting sick or severely ill with COVID-19, but some people who are fully vaccinated still get COVID-19, and some have been hospitalized with COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have information on the vaccines that are approved and authorized in the United States to prevent COVID-19. Visit the CDC website for more information on vaccination and other steps you can take to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.  
  
For people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 infection, treatments are available that can reduce the chances of being hospitalized or dying from the disease. Medications to treat COVID-19 must be prescribed by a health care provider and started as soon as possible after diagnosis to be effective. For people at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, contact a health care provider right away to determine if you are eligible for treatment, even if your symptoms are mild.  
  
Researchers are studying additional drugs as possible treatments for COVID-19. NIH is supporting many clinical trials to test possible treatments.  
  
The FDA has also authorized emergency use of a preventive medicine to help prevent COVID-19 infection in certain adults and children 12 years of age and older (such as those who are severely immunocompromised or allergic to COVID-19 vaccines).  
  
More Resources  
  
For more information about what everyone can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the United States, visit CDC s COVID-19 webpage. For more information on NIH research on COVID-19, visit NIH s COVID-19 webpage. You can find SARS-CoV-2 literature, sequence, and clinical content from the National Center for Biotechnology Information, National Library of Medicine. You can also subscribe to receive coronavirus updates from NIH.  
  
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