

5G AND CORONAVIRUS

THEORIES

Have you been learning about coronavirus on the internet? If so, you may have come across articles linking 5G to the spread of coronavirus. This is misinformation and completely untrue!

We are going to look into this in detail... so let's go!

So let's get some important facts about 5G clear...

5G - stands for '5th Generation' and refers to the new technological developments in wireless communication (networks), following on from 2G, 3G and 4G

It is a major technological development that will transform how we live our lives. It is not just about having faster internet connection, but about everything being interconnected, including people, objects and machines



What is a Conspiracy Theory?

A conspiracy theory is 'an attempt to explain harmful or tragic events as the result of the actions of a small powerful group'

Conspiracy theories reject the mainstream understanding of an event, often using the mainstream narrative as proof of the conspiracy.



TASK: Have you heard about any famous conspiracy theories? Write a list of any you know of...



Are they true?



It can be tempting to believe conspiracy theories because they are often exciting and interesting...

BUT

... they are often completely incorrect and usually do not have valid evidence to support them. They may be the result of paranoia and should be treated with **extreme suspicion!**



The 5G Conspiracy

For a long time, conspiracy theories about 5G have existed on the fringes of the internet.

Some people claim it causes serious illnesses including cancer.

REALITY CHECK: this is untrue - the type of radio waves used in 5G networks are 'non-ionising' which means they do not have enough energy to damage DNA and cause damage (leading to cancer)

In fact, the World Health Organisation categorises 5G as less likely to cause cancer than drinking alcohol and eating processed meat!



5G and Coronavirus...



2 main arguments have been used to suggest 5G causes the spread of coronavirus:

1) "*5G lowers the human immune system*" - WRONG, as already mentioned, 5G radiation is much too low to cause damage to the human body

2) "*the virus communicates using the radio waves so spreads quicker*" - WRONG, this originally came from the work of a biologist who said bacteria MAY produce electromagnetic signals... this is controversial AND **coronavirus is not a bacteria, it is a virus!**

ABOVE ALL... coronavirus has spread in countries and cities that don't even have 5G yet!



What's happening?



- In the UK, at least **20 "5G masts"** have been **destroyed** by members of the public who believe the conspiracy theory - they are often not even 5G active...
- Telecoms workers are being **attacked** and **abused** at work - they are just making repairs that keep our networks functioning so we can use the internet and call each other
- People are spreading this **misinformation** about the virus which makes it much **harder** to fight - if we don't understand what is true, how can we protect ourselves from Covid-19?

Activity: Fact or Fiction

Read the below statements. Sort them into two groups - **TRUE** or **FALSE**

"the virus uses 5G radio waves to communicate and infect new people"

"the virus spreads through person to person, mostly through small droplets in coughs, sneezes and breathing"

"5G weakens human immune systems"

"telecommunications masts are crucial in helping us fight the virus effectively"

"telecommunications masts are causing us harm"

"the government is lying to us about the effects of 5G, with the help of scientists"

Activity: Fact or Fiction

Here are the correct answers... How did you do?

✗ *"the virus uses 5G radio waves to communicate and infect new people" - FALSE*

✓ *"the virus spreads through person to person, mostly through small droplets in coughs, sneezes and breathing" - TRUE*

✗ *"5G weakens human immune systems" - FALSE*

✓ *"telecommunications masts are crucial in helping us fight the virus effectively" - TRUE*

✗ *"telecommunications masts are causing us harm" - FALSE*

✗ *"the government is lying to us about the effects of 5G, with the help of scientists" - FALSE*

Final Tip - Credible News Sources

Now you know all about the "5G and coronavirus" conspiracy, you can inform other and help stop the spread of disinformation!

REMEMBER: to avoid being tricked by these theories, you should make sure you are reading **credible** news sources such as mainstream newspapers and the BBC.

Don't be a sheep!

If you are unsure about the validity of something you read, you can check using the **independent fact checkers** below:

Full Fact - <https://fullfact.org/>

Snopes - <https://www.snopes.com/>