



<https://family.co/early-years-coronavirus-1>

As we all try to stay safe from COVID-19, arming yourself with accurate news information has never been more important – but it's not always easy. "Fake news" can be challenging to recognize because there's often a little truth mixed in with misinformation.

With today's social media platforms, false information can go viral, being shared countless times across the globe quickly. It's easy to partially read an article, assume it's accurate, and hit "share."

It's important that we all do our part to prevent this, because the spread of misinformation can drown out the credible health information that we all need right now. One false news article can do double harm by leading us down a dangerous path and keeping us from valuable, helpful information.

Here are some tips to help recognize accurate, useful information:

- **Is there a date?** With COVID-19, information is changing rapidly. So, it's important to know when the article was published and last updated so you can be sure you're getting the most current data.
- **Who is the author?** If you're reading about the latest medical advances for COVID-19, make sure the author is qualified. Or, look for a medical review by a doctor or other health professional.
- **Are sources listed?** If an article refers to a particular study, you should be able to get information about the study. Some sites will directly link to a scientific journal article. For others, you may have to scroll down to click on a source list. Beware of vague references to research that you can't easily validate. If an expert is referenced, check their qualifications online as well. Do they have the education and expertise to give their opinion?
- **Is the website legitimate?** If it feels like you're reading an advertisement, you probably are. Check the website's 'about' page to find out who supports the organization and what their mission and values are. Are they committed to educating the public and raising awareness about health issues? Sometimes a fake site will try to match its logo or URL to a legitimate website. Look closely to make sure you're at the right place.
- **Is the information available on other websites?** COVID-19-related news trends are typically consistent across legitimate websites. If you're reading something that sounds different or contrary to what you're seeing elsewhere, start digging. If someone is making a recommendation you're not sure of, look to sites like the CDC, WHO, AAP, or your state's Department of Public Health for guidance. And of course, call your doctor.