

Facebook ramps up effort to curb vaccine hoaxes

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Facebook announced fresh moves to curb the spread of coronavirus misinformation in coordination with global health authorities

Facebook on Monday said it is ramping up efforts to stem the spread of misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines, spread facts, and figure out who might be wary of getting the jab.

The move includes banning groups which repeatedly spread [misinformation](#) and debunked claims about the virus and vaccines in general.

The leading social [network](#) has been highlighting health advice from reliable agencies and removing COVID-19 misinformation for months and on Monday expanded that initiative.

A list of debunked claims about the virus or vaccines that are not welcomed at Facebook was updated with the help of the World Health Organization.

The list of barred misinformation included claims COVID-19 was created by people or that it is safer to get the virus than the [vaccine](#).

It also included false claims that vaccines are toxic or cause autism.

Critics of the social media giant's handling of misinformation were not convinced by its latest move.

"Facebook has been promising to crack down on COVID and anti-vaxx misinformation for the past year," the nonprofit Center for Countering Digital Hate said in a message fired off on Twitter.

"Every time, it fails to meet these headline announcements with action."

Groups or accounts that share vaccine misinformation may be removed completely from the social network, warned Facebook vice president of integrity Guy Rosen.

Facebook prominently hosts a COVID-19 information center, and makes a priority of featuring reliable sources in results for queries on the topic.

People in charge of groups at the social network were told to require posts of members prone to spreading bogus information about vaccines or the pandemic to be approved before being shared.

At Facebook-owned Instagram, accounts of people discouraging vaccinations will be harder to find using automated search tools, according to the social network.

Facebook said that it has gotten more than 50 million responses to a COVID-19 survey it launched last year in a collaboration with two US universities.

It was designed to gather insights from people about COVID-19 symptoms, mask wearing, and access to care.

"The survey program is one of the largest ever conducted and has helped health researchers better monitor and forecast the spread of COVID-19," Facebook said.

"The [survey data](#) will provide a better understanding of trends in vaccine intent across sociodemographics, race, geography and more."

Survey findings about vaccine attitudes will be shared globally, according to the social network.

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