

# Communication with the public

**Source for the  
material: WHO**

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**World Health  
Organization**

# Listening to the Public

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- It is nearly impossible to design successful messages that bridge the gap between the expert and the public without knowing what the public thinks
  - WHO Outbreak Communication Guidelines

# Do's

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- Remember that crisis communication is a dialogue
- Set up a system of communications surveillance to monitor the public's reactions to ongoing events, trust levels, misconceptions, rumours, etc.
- Address the public's concerns as the situation evolves and if necessary deal with any misconceptions

# Don'ts

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- Don't discount the public's concerns, even if they seem unfounded. When a publicly held view is mistaken, it should be acknowledged publicly and corrected—not patronized or ridiculed.
- Don't underestimate the public's interest in the outbreak, or their ability to understand technical assessments. Any event which could affect their own health and safety will attract attention.
- Don't neglect to provide information about what the public can do to make themselves safer. This empowers the public to take some responsibility for their own health.