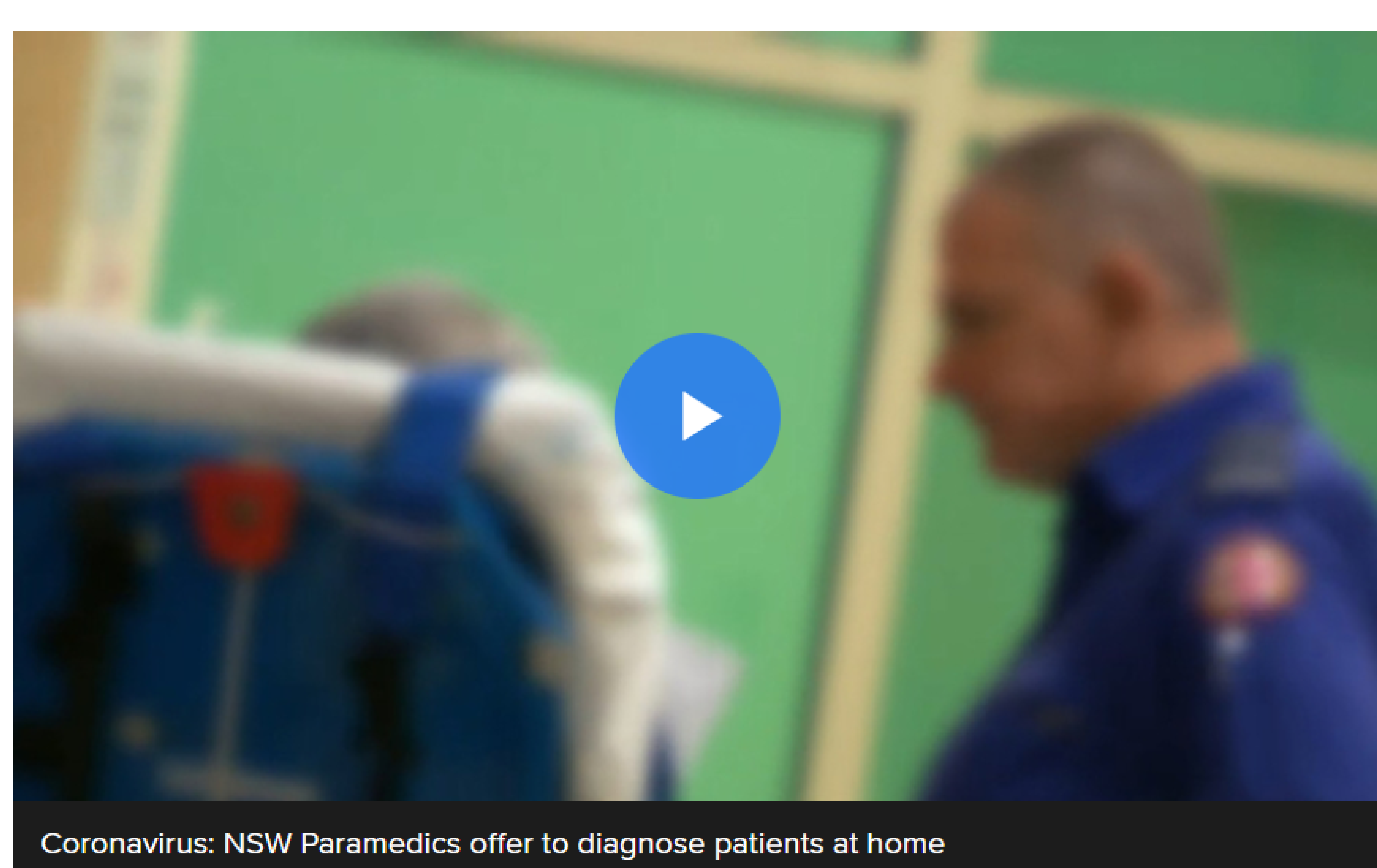


# Coronavirus: fears see patients lean towards internet health services

By Inga Neilsen | 2:30pm Mar 4, 2020



Coronavirus: NSW Paramedics offer to diagnose patients at home

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Internet health services may become the new norm, with many Australians opting to see their doctor online in a bid to [avoid contracting COVID-19](#).

GP Muhammad Mohsin said his internet health service Prime Medic has had a 20 to 30 per cent increase in consultations over the past week, largely for coronavirus concerns.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM CORONAVIRUS



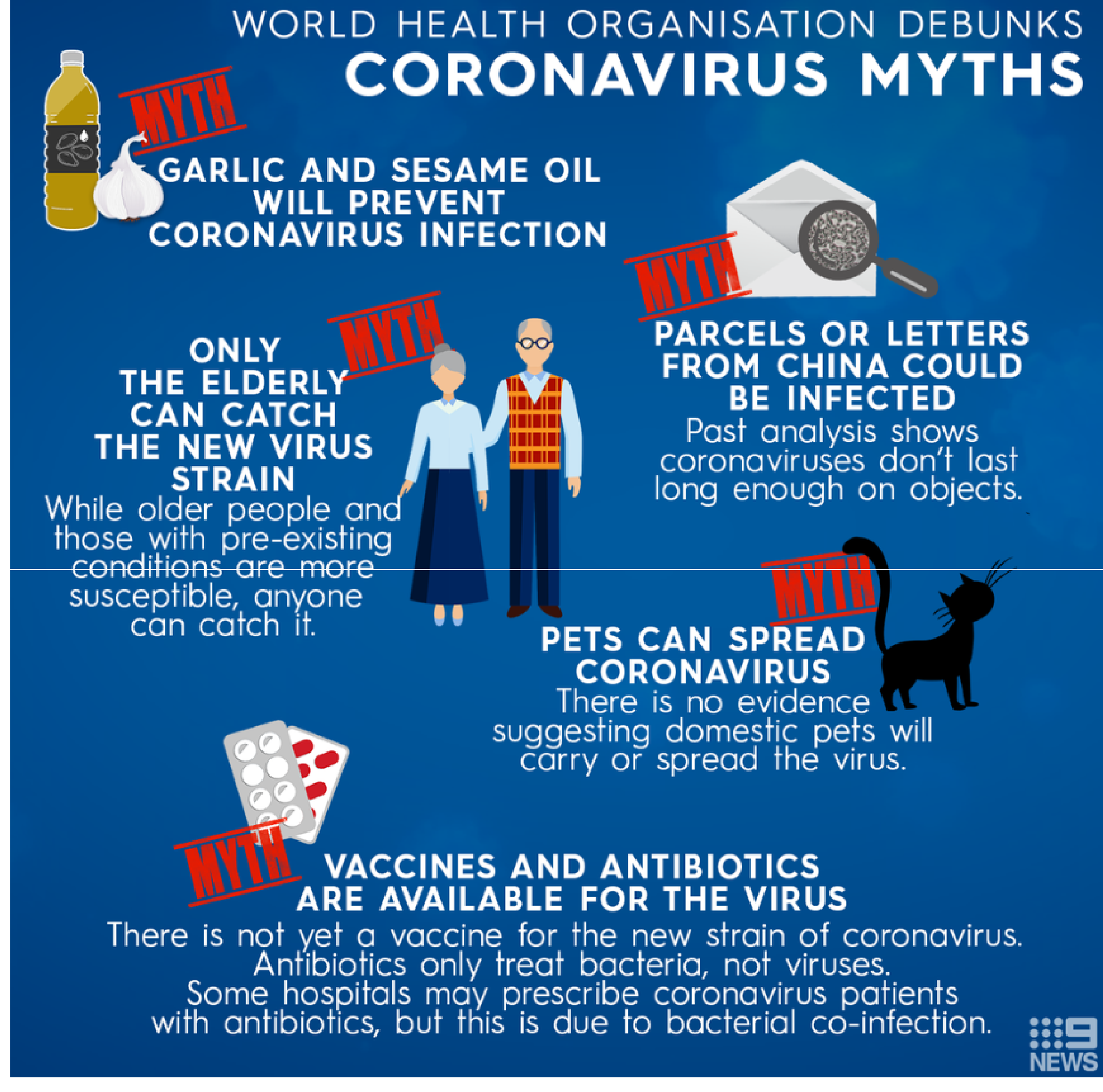
How to protect yourself and others from coronavirus (9News)

"Understandably, there is a lot of anxiety around the coronavirus. People are avoiding public places and going to the doctors because they fear contracting the virus," Dr Mohsin said.

"This is one reason why internet-based health services are growing in popularity. People can see a doctor online in the safety of their own homes.

"In my opinion and according to the latest [Australian Department of Health](#) guidelines, it is better to contact an online GP or the [Coronavirus Health Information Line](#). If the patient is at risk, they should self-quarantine until further tests are conducted."

Programs such as Skype allow doctors to provide medical advice online via video consultations, such as prescriptions, medical certificates and referrals.

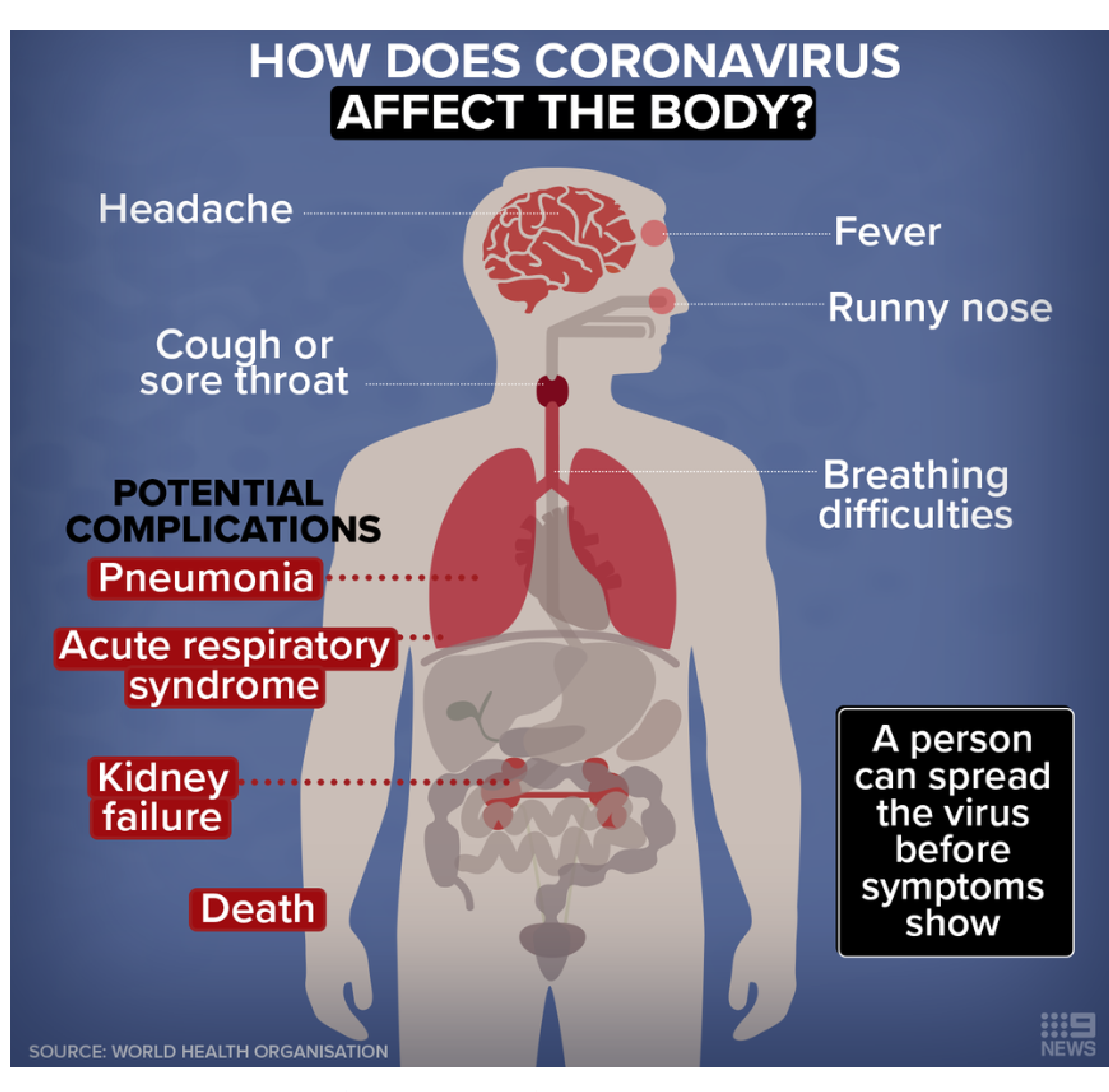


The World Health Organisation debunks coronavirus myths (Graphic: Tara Blancato)

The Health Services Union has also recognised the potential risks that visiting a doctor in person may have and has called for paramedics in NSW to conduct coronavirus home visits.

"Our paramedic members are prepared to do their bit by lifting their restriction on home diagnoses so they can test for COVID-19," HSU said in a statement.

"This will allow potential patients to at least be diagnosed at home and ease the strain on already clogged emergency departments."



How does coronavirus affect the body? (Graphic: Tara Blancato)

GP and Director of Primary Care at Macquarie University Hospital Professor Simon Willcock said the public's concern about visiting health facilities is rational, but shouldn't be overstated.

"Visiting a doctor or hospital poses the same risk as going to your local supermarket or catching public transport," Prof. Willcock said.

"We need to contextualise coronavirus as we do every other year with the ordinary influenza. Most people don't contract the flu at the doctor's surgery, the same applies for coronavirus."

Professor Willcock said the single message is "phone ahead."

"If you have flu-like symptoms, phone your GP ahead of your appointment as many patients can be managed over the phone to avoid putting other patients in risk," he said.

"Seek advice promptly and trust that those at the front line will deal with your concerns appropriately."