

Appendix A: Methods Supplement

All analyses were conducted using R version 4.0.1. Continuous variables were scaled 0-1 to facilitate comparisons across independent dependent variables.

Procedure and Materials

After providing informed consent, participants verified that they were above 18 years of age, completed an attention check, reported their party affiliation, and indicated their political ideology on a 7-point scale ranging from *extremely liberal* (1) to *extremely conservative* (5). Next, participants who were assigned to the treated condition, responded to five questions about Trump and the Trump administration's response to COVID-19 (these questions were asked at the end of the survey for those in the control condition). Participants then to our outcome measures regarding their attitudes towards the pandemic, their behavioral intentions, and their factual beliefs on three issues related to the coronavirus (safety of ibuprofen, FDA approval of chloroquine, and asymptomatic transmission). Finally, participants completed some final demographic information and were debriefed.

Covariates

In addition to standard demographics (age, gender, race, and college education), we asked participants if they follow politics on a 5-point scale the ranged from *never* (1) to *all of the time* (5) ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.05$).

Predictors

Along with the predictor of experimental treatment (i.e. "questions as treatment" at the beginning vs. end of the survey), we also used party affiliation as a predictor in our models. Participants were asked "[g]enerally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent or something else?" with the corresponding response options. If they identified as

Democrat or Republican, they were asked if they identified as a *strong* or *not very strong* partisan. Those who identified as Independents or something else were asked “Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?” with the corresponding response options and a *neither* option. For our analysis, we coded participants as Democrats if they identified as Democrats or felt closer to the Democratic Party. We coded participants as Republicans if they identified Republicans or felt closer to the Republican Party. We only coded participants who felt close to neither party as Independents.

Outcome Measures

Factual Beliefs

Participants responded to three factual beliefs about the coronavirus on a 5-point scale from *definitely false* (1) to *definitely true* (5) with a midpoint of *neither true or false* (3) along with a “Don’t Know” option: “Experts advise against using ibuprofen if you think you might be infected with the coronavirus.”, “The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved chloroquine specifically for the treatment of patients with COVID-19.” and “People can transmit the virus even if they do not show any symptoms.”

Behavioral Intentions

Participants responded to two items on a 7-point scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7) with a midpoint of *neither agree nor disagree* (4): “I believe that I can help prevent deaths by staying at home” and “By staying at home I can help slow down the spread of the virus so that we can avoid too many people being sick at the same time and our hospitals not being able to help them all”, $r(1584) = .64$.⁸

Additionally, participants were asked “How likely are you to stay at home (with the exception of essential tasks like grocery shopping or visiting the doctor)?” on a 5-point scale ranging from

⁸Our agency items were originally designed as one combined scale with three other items. However, the resulting scale’s reliability was low. Consequently, we ran an exploratory factor analysis, in which two factors emerged with factor loadings > 0.5. One of these two factors is now our agency scale.

not at all likely (1) to *extremely likely* (5).

Attitudes

*Trade-Off: Economy vs. Public Health: Participants read that the coronavirus will affect that U.S economy and that some people were very concerned about protecting the economy while others were very concerned about protecting public health. They were then asked where they stood on this issue. They responded on a 7n-point scale from *only concerned about protecting public health* (1) to *only concerned about protecting the U.S. economy* (7).

*Scared: We then asked participants to use a 6-point scale from *not at all scared* (1) to *extremely scared* (7) along with a "Don't know" option, to indicate their agreement with a series of questions that reflect how scared they are of different possible consequences of the coronavirus ($\alpha = .84$). These items included but were not limited to questions about fear of contracting the virus, passing on the virus unknowingly, the U.S. economy going into recession, etc. Additionally, we randomized the order in which participants were asked the "scared"-items. Some participants were randomly assigned to receive these items after the compliance item rather than at the beginning of the survey. Including the placement of these items as a control in our statistical models does not affect any of our conclusions.

Appendix B: Additional Tables

Table 1: Descriptives Political Ideology and Treatment Questions

	<i>N</i>	Ideology	Failure	Trump Feel	Twitter	Approval	Overblown
Democrat	700	2.95 (1.58)	4.26 (0.95)	2.67 (3.41)	2.68 (1.40)	2.0 (1.14)	3.07 (2.22)
Independent	238	4.02 (1.06)	3.42 (1.29)	4.43 (3.51)	3.11 (1.22)	2.51 (1.00)	3.27 (1.93)
Republican	649	4.89 (1.77)	2.82 (1.41)	7.78 (2.66)	3.98 (1.10)	2.99 (0.88)	3.88 (20.8)

Note: Cell entries are means with standard deviations in parentheses.

Table 2: Full Models Testing the Effectiveness of the Questions as Treatment at Polarizing Partisans

	Factual Beliefs						
	Ibuprofen	Chloroquine	Transmission	Agency	Stay-at-Home	Trade-Off	Scared
(Intercept)	3.20*** (0.14)	3.07*** (0.15)	4.12*** (0.08)	5.07*** (0.14)	3.97*** (0.08)	4.09*** (0.18)	4.16*** (0.12)
treatment x Republican	-0.19 (0.15)	-0.12 (0.16)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.15)	-0.05 (0.09)	-0.02 (0.18)	0.02 (0.13)
treatment x Independent	-0.25 (0.20)	-0.70** (0.22)	0.05 (0.12)	0.04 (0.20)	-0.23 (0.12)	0.02 (0.25)	-0.15 (0.18)
Republican	0.14 (0.10)	0.44*** (0.11)	-0.00 (0.06)	-0.09 (0.10)	-0.07 (0.06)	0.49*** (0.13)	-0.37*** (0.09)
Independent	0.12 (0.15)	0.30 (0.16)	-0.09 (0.09)	-0.17 (0.15)	0.03 (0.09)	0.17 (0.19)	-0.26* (0.13)
treatment	0.16 (0.10)	0.11 (0.11)	0.00 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.10)	0.10 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.13)	-0.04 (0.09)
age	-0.12 (0.17)	-1.05*** (0.18)	0.33*** (0.10)	0.33* (0.17)	0.30** (0.10)	-1.06*** (0.21)	-0.83*** (0.14)
gender	0.00 (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.02*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
race	-0.08 (0.09)	-0.26** (0.09)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.25** (0.09)	-0.02 (0.05)	0.09 (0.11)	0.02 (0.08)
college	0.18* (0.07)	0.16* (0.07)	-0.05 (0.04)	0.07 (0.07)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.09)	0.20** (0.06)
follows politics	0.27 (0.14)	0.13 (0.15)	0.51*** (0.08)	0.85*** (0.14)	0.53*** (0.08)	-0.48** (0.18)	0.56*** (0.12)
R2	0.012	0.089	0.047	0.052	0.055	0.043	0.074
F	1.750	13.106	7.522	8.522	9.150	7.012	12.554
Model Change p	.306	0.006	.886	.721	.176	.986	.600

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The p -value for Model change refers to the significance level of the model comparison with the model reported in [3](#)

Table 3: Full Models Measuring the Partisan Divide while Controlling for Covariates and Treatment Condition

	Factual Beliefs							
	Ibuprofen	Chloroquine	Transmission	Agency	Stay-at-Home	Trade-Off	Scared	
(Intercept)	3.27*** (0.13)	3.15*** (0.14)	4.12*** (0.08)	5.09*** (0.13)	4.00*** (0.08)	4.09*** (0.17)	4.16*** (0.12)	
Republican	0.05 (0.07)	0.37*** (0.08)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.13 (0.07)	-0.09* (0.05)	0.48*** (0.09)	-0.36*** (0.07)	
Independent	-0.01 (0.11)	-0.08 (0.11)	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.15 (0.10)	-0.09 (0.06)	0.18 (0.13)	-0.34*** (0.09)	
treatment	0.05 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.07)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.07)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.06)	
age	-0.12 (0.17)	-1.08*** (0.18)	0.33*** (0.10)	0.34* (0.17)	0.30** (0.10)	-1.06*** (0.21)	-0.84*** (0.14)	
gender	0.00 (0.00)	-0.02*** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.02*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	
race	-0.08 (0.09)	-0.27** (0.09)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.25** (0.09)	-0.03 (0.05)	0.09 (0.11)	0.02 (0.08)	
college	0.18* (0.07)	0.16* (0.08)	-0.05 (0.04)	0.07 (0.07)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.09)	0.20** (0.06)	
follows politics	0.26 (0.14)	0.13 (0.15)	0.50*** (0.08)	0.85*** (0.14)	0.54*** (0.08)	-0.48** (0.18)	0.57*** (0.12)	
R2	0.011	0.082	0.046	0.051	0.053	0.043	0.074	
F	1.891	14.997	9.383	10.580	10.992	8.773	15.574	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .005$ (two-sided). Cell entries are OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.