

thepuristonline.com

The website for The Purist, a wellness magazine founded by Cristina Cuomo that has published false and unsubstantiated medical claims, including about treatments for the COVID-19 virus.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic standards of credibility and transparency.

Score: 27.5/100

Ownership and Financing

The Purist does not clearly identify its owner. However, Cristina Cuomo identifies herself as the website's founder on her Twitter and Instagram profile pages. Cuomo also signed the website's About Us page, explaining her motivations for launching a wellness website.

ThePuristOnline.com runs display ads for its own digital and print publications, and generates revenue from subscriptions to its print magazine, which publishes six times a year.

Content

ThePuristOnline.com's tagline is "An Adventure In Wellness." On its About Us page, Cuomo describes The Purist as "the place to discover ways to refine and define the life you seek. Here, you will find strength, equilibrium, peace of mind, lots of laughter, and loads of love."

Content on the site is divided into a number of categories, including Fitness, Food, Kids, Mindfulness, and Inspiration; users can also explore stories by one of five locations, including Aspen, Hamptons, LA, Miami/Palm Beach, and NYC.

Stories on ThePuristOnline.com cover beauty, health, family, and popular culture. Typical headlines include "Earth Day Home Health Tips," "Up Your At-Home Beauty Routine," "DIY Techniques for De-Stressing," "Tending to Your Internal Garden," and "Winter Solutions For Optimum Health."

The website also houses Cuomo's personal blog and offers limited video content, most of which covers photoshoots for the magazine.

-  Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
-  Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
-  Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
-  Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
-  Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
-  Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
-  Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
-  Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
-  The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

The Purist covered the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, including a personal blog by Cuomo about her experience recovering from the disease, after she, her husband (CNN anchor Chris Cuomo), and eventually her son contracted it. Other stories included “Resilience in the Time of the Pandemic,” “Hope For Today: Understanding and Preventing the Effects of Social Isolation,” and “COVID-19 Dos and Don’ts from NYU’s ‘Dr. Germ’.”

Credibility

Articles on ThePuristOnline.com do not generally cite specific research to back claims, instead relying on phrases such as “studies show,” “science says,” and “science has proven.”

The site has promoted unproven and sometimes dangerous treatments for a number of ailments, including the virus that causes COVID-19.

In an April 2020 post following Cuomo’s coronavirus diagnosis, titled “Cristina Cuomo Corona Protocol, Week 3,” Cuomo said that she was “ready to try alternatives” to treat the virus and said that her doctor “prescribed I take a type of homeopathic bath, a water-and-bleach bath, to combat the radiation and pollutants in the system and oxygenate it.” Cuomo wrote that the solution was a “more affordable, evidence-based doctor recommendation” and quoted her doctor as saying, “there is no danger in doing this.” To support the treatment, Cuomo’s article cited an August 2018 article that was published on the Mayo Clinic’s website and said, “if properly diluted and used as directed, a bleach bath is safe for children and adults.” The article, however, made the recommendation for patients with chronic eczema, which Cuomo did not note in her post.

Cuomo acknowledged in her blog that the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology recommends water and bleach baths for a number of skin conditions. However, bleach has not been found to treat the COVID-19 virus. Clorox, the bleach maker which Cuomo said she used as part of her bath, said on its website that its product “is NOT recommended for

personal hygiene of any kind.” The World Health Organization states on its site, “bleach and disinfectant should be used carefully to disinfect surfaces only ... Spraying and introducing bleach or another disinfectant into your body WILL NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous.”

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lists Clorox-brand bleach as an approved disinfectant for use against the COVID-19 virus, but notes in bold red text that “these products are for use on surfaces, NOT humans.”

Cuomo’s COVID-19 regimen also involved a “vitamin-packed drip” that she said included high doses of vitamin C. Cuomo wrote on her website that she had read an article that claimed that Vitamin C helped patients recover from the virus at New York-based Northwell Health’ hospital system. “The IV version is a safe alternative to untested pharmaceuticals,” she wrote, quoting another physician who treated her for COVID-19.

While a clinical trial is underway in China to test whether high doses of vitamin C might be effective against the virus that causes COVID-19, the claim is not yet supported by scientific evidence. The WHO has stated that taking Vitamin C is not an effective remedy for the virus. Both the WHO and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have said that there is no specific treatment recommended for treating the virus responsible for the 2020 outbreak.

Regarding Cuomo’s reference to success with Vitamin C treatments at Northwell Health, a spokesman for the hospital system, Jason Molinet, told USA Today in a May 2020 article, “Vitamin C was one of many therapies employed at the discretion of physicians in our health system.” However, he did not elaborate on patient outcomes.

Following public criticism of Cuomo’s bleach bath recommendation as a COVID-19 treatment, including fact-checks by USA Today, CBS News, and Science

Times, Cuomo amended her post in April 2020 to add, “I am aware that what I am about to talk about are remedies for people who are already in a privileged situation. ... None of these natural remedies below should be taken without consulting a doctor or naturopath.”

“And no way am I saying please try this,” Cuomo told People in an interview. “It’s just the path that I took and I’m sharing it because there isn’t a lot of anecdotal evidence.”

The Purist promoted vitamin C as an immunity-booster in another undated post, titled “Ask The Dr.” Vitamin C was named in the article as one of several “supportive supplements” for immune health, and author Dr. Frank Lipman wrote that “to protect against infection, take 2 to 3 grams of vitamin C every day.”

The Mayo Clinic recommends on its website that the average adult take 65 to 90 milligrams of vitamin C daily, with an upper limit of 2,000 milligrams per day. Lipman’s suggestion of 2 to 3 grams per day — or 2,000 to 3,000 milligrams — exceeds the recommended average. While the Mayo Clinic says that “too much dietary vitamin C is unlikely to be harmful,” it warns that megadoses of the supplement can trigger side effects such as diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and heartburn. The Linus Pauling Institute at Oregon State University says on its website that science lacks solid human evidence that vitamin C can boost immune function, and states that it “does not reduce the risk of becoming ill.”

An undated ThePuristOnline.com article headlined “Electro Lite” made the unsubstantiated claim that exposure to electromagnetic radiation from power lines, including 5G lines, cell phones, and other electronic devices can cause health problems. The article, citing an interview with the founder of a wellness company, said that “stress response to electromagnetic radiation can include free-radical damage, premature aging and inflammation across the body and brain; compromised

detoxification due to cell-wall hardening; weight gain; attention and behavior issues; and a feeling of being spent.”

“The amount and amplitude of exposure to these artificial and intense frequencies is increasing, “the article continued, “not only as so-called ‘smart’ homes with devices, speakers and appliances that communicate wirelessly add more pulsing signals to the soup—but even more worryingly, as the ultrahigh-speed 5G communications network starts to roll out in our towns and cities.”

The World Health Organization says on its website that “to date, and after much research performed, no adverse health effect has been causally linked with exposure to wireless technologies,” including those supported by 5G networks. A March 2020 report from the International Commission of Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection, a Germany-based organization that studies the health effects of non-ionizing radiation such as radio waves, found no evidence that 5G exposure posed a risk to human health. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration says on its website that “there is no consistent or credible scientific evidence of health problems caused by the exposure to radio frequency energy emitted by cell phones.”

Another undated article on The Purist promoted the use of biomagnetism -- a process in which magnets are placed at different points in the body -- to equalize a person’s pH level. The author claimed, “The precise placement of high-strength magnets over specific areas of the body can reenergize and balance a patient’s internal pH in areas which often become overly acidic and dysfunctional in ill patients.” The article quoted a doctor who said the approach had alleviated symptoms of patients with “lumbar pain, sciatica, respiratory issues, chronic coughs, asthma ... migraines, herpes and many others.”

The U.S. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, a division of the National Institutes of Health, says on its website, “research studies don’t

support the use of static magnets for any form of pain.” The agency warns patients against “static magnets or electromagnets that you can buy without a prescription to postpone seeing a health care provider about pain or any other medical problem.” Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center says on its site that studies have failed to find any effect of magnets of pain, and “in the few trials that did, design flaws and possible placebo effects have called results into question.”

Because The Purist has published several articles that make false and unsubstantiated health claims, including about COVID-19, NewsGuard has determined that the website repeatedly publishes false content and does not gather and present information responsibly.

The website does not publish a corrections policy, and NewsGuard was unable to locate any examples of corrections.

The Purist did not respond to three messages sent by NewsGuard via the site’s contact form regarding its corrections policy and examples of misleading content.

Headlines on ThePuristOnline.com generally do not repeat false claims that appear in stories. For example, the article cited above that asserts biomagnetism can change a person’s pH level is headlined “Biomagnetism.”

The Purist does not typically run opinion content. When Cuomo writes her personal blog posts, they are filed under the Christina’s Blog section of the site.

Transparency

The Purist identifies Cuomo as the website’s founder but does not clearly disclose that she or anyone else is the owner. Biographical information about Cuomo, who is identified in many articles as the website’s editor, is available on the site’s About Us page, which meets NewsGuard’s standard for revealing who is in charge.

Many articles on ThePuristOnline.com are not attributed to an author. When articles are attributed, no biographical or contact information is provided for the

writers.

The Purist did not respond to three messages sent by NewsGuard via the site's contact form regarding its failure to disclose ownership and failure to provide information about content creators.

The website does not run display advertisements, other than house ads for ThePuristOnline.com. No relationship with any advertisers or affiliates is disclosed. However, many articles that appear in lifestyle sections on the site promote particular products, although they are not labeled as advertising. For example, an undated article titled "Clean Sleep" attached a Purist promotional code to the story, offering a 10 percent discount for the performance bedding company BEDGEAR. (Such promotional codes are typically used to allow a brand to attribute a purchase to the website featuring the promotion and reward it

accordingly.) "Sleep plays a critical role in immune function, and BEDGEAR's M3 Mattress ensures sound sleep on a next-level modular mattress with dual side personalization that's also easy to clean," the article said. Another undated post, titled "Next Level Juicing," promoted a cold press juicer, and provided a Purist promo code to promote the Nama Cold Press Juicer.

Because the website does not disclose any affiliate marketing program or relationship with advertisers, and because it publishes promotional articles with website discount codes for several companies' products, without labeling them as sponsored content, NewsGuard has determined that the website does not meet its standard for clearly labeling advertising.

Three NewsGuard messages sent to The Purist asking about the promotional article and about any financial relationship between the website and the companies did not receive a response. NewsGuard attempted to contact five manufacturers whose products were promoted on the site, including BEDGEAR and Nama, seeking confirmation of a commercial relationship, but did not receive a response.

History The first issue of The Purist magazine was published in May 2017. The website's domain was also registered that year.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: [Click Here](#)

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