



Is the Flu Shot Really Effective?



Scott Sexton



January 16, 2020

0 Share



Have you ever skipped your yearly flu shot? Maybe you always skip your yearly flu shot. Were you chastised for it? “It’s not JUST the flu. The flu kills 80,000 people every year. When you don’t get a flu shot, it puts all the rest of us at risk! You can’t come visit my family this year without a flu shot.” I’ve heard versions of all of those.

To be perfectly honest, I’ve received plenty of flu shots. I’ve even gotten them in front of school children to show the kiddos that the shot was no big deal. I wasn’t exactly a vaccine evangelist, but I didn’t think there was anything wrong with them, either.



Then, one year, I happened to mention to an acquaintance that I wasn't planning to get a flu shot. "Why not?" she asked, stiffening. I said that I just didn't want to go down to the clinic, and I wondered aloud, "Was it really that important?"

What followed was one of those very informative moments where someone jumps all over you because you dared to question the status quo (even if accidentally). I didn't have any snappy comebacks. I'm sure I mumbled some placating reply. But I knew that I had to learn more, because this was a question I wasn't allowed to ask. And if you're not allowed to ask a question, it's probably because you asked the right one.

Why Do I Need the Flu Shot?



There's a lot of controversy over vaccinations. Which vaccines are we talking about? Who's data is valid? What are the risks (if any) and the benefits (if any)? Etc. So to keep things simple here, I'll be focusing on the yearly flu vaccine only. To avoid disputes over sources, I'll be pulling materials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or from other pro-vaccine sources. I will have one necessary exception to this, but it will be clearly noted in the text.

Flu Mortality: "It's Not JUST the Flu!"

If the flu infected 10 people every year and killed half of them, that would be tragic. But

in a world of over 7 billion people, it wouldn't come close to justifying a flu shot. On the other hand, if it infected 1 billion people a year and killed half of them, that would be a worldwide nightmare. We couldn't work hard enough to prevent it. So it's important for us to figure this out: "Just how dangerous is the flu?"

According to the CDC, the flu is the 8th leading cause of death in the US. In 2016, it was responsible for 51,537 deaths.¹⁾

Whether that sounds like a lot (when compared to the 2016 population of just over 324 million) is up to you. But what should really be pointed out is that this is not the number of flu deaths.

The CDC combines flu and pneumonia deaths together.²⁾ This includes all pneumonia deaths—not just the ones linked to flu infection. And depending on the presentation, this number may include other infections, as well. This artificially inflates the number and is misleading, because the number is nearly always presented as "flu deaths."

So how many flu deaths are there really? On average, the number may be just over 1,000.³⁾ (Note: This is where I used an outside source. This was necessary because the CDC does not report this number.)

Herd Immunity: "You Have to Get Vaccinated to Protect Me!"

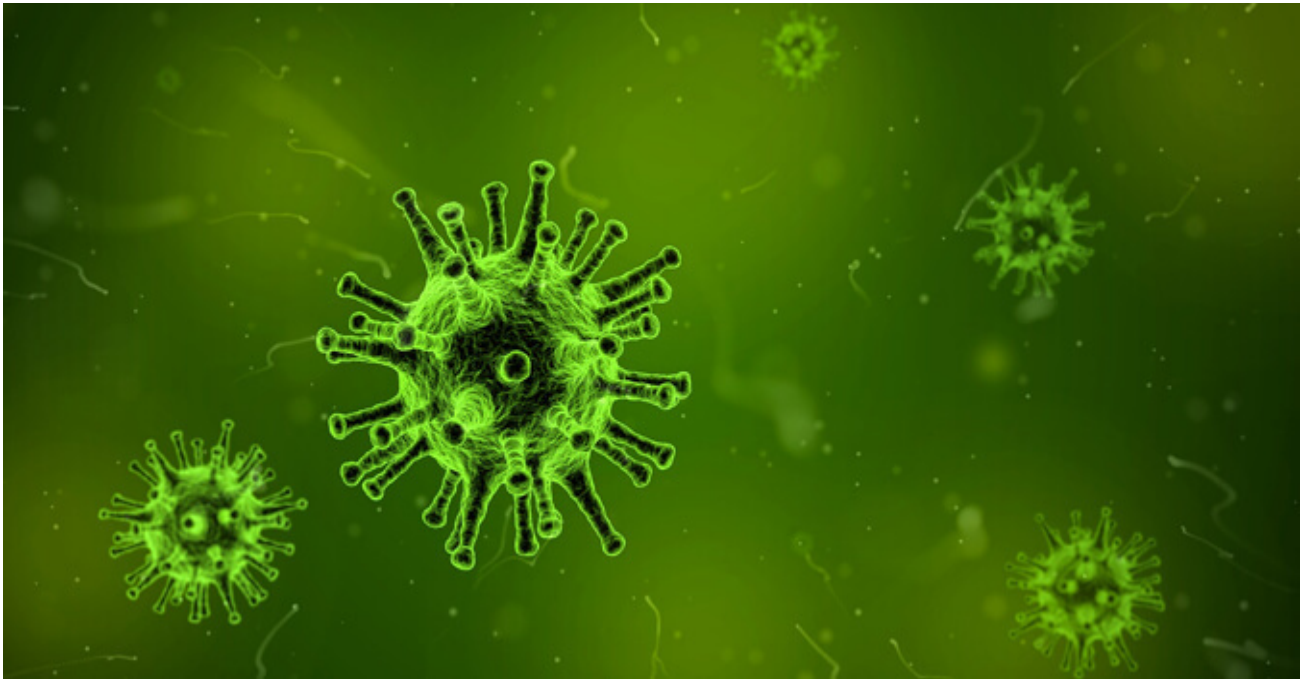


The more people who get vaccinated, the fewer sick people there will be to spread the infection to others (vaccinated or not). It's a good idea, in theory. The exact number you need to be vaccinated will vary depending on how contagious the disease is and on the effectiveness of the vaccine.

It's hard to pin down numbers to make the herd immunity theory plausible with the flu. It changes every year. But as a comparison, the measles vaccine is said to be 93% to 97% effective, and we still need 95% of the population to be vaccinated to achieve herd immunity.⁴⁾

The flu vaccine is not nearly this effective, as we will see. Also, the flu vaccine has the rarely discussed problem of increased virus shedding. That really throws a monkey wrench into the idea of herd immunity.

Virus Shedding: “Nothing to See Here. Move Along.”



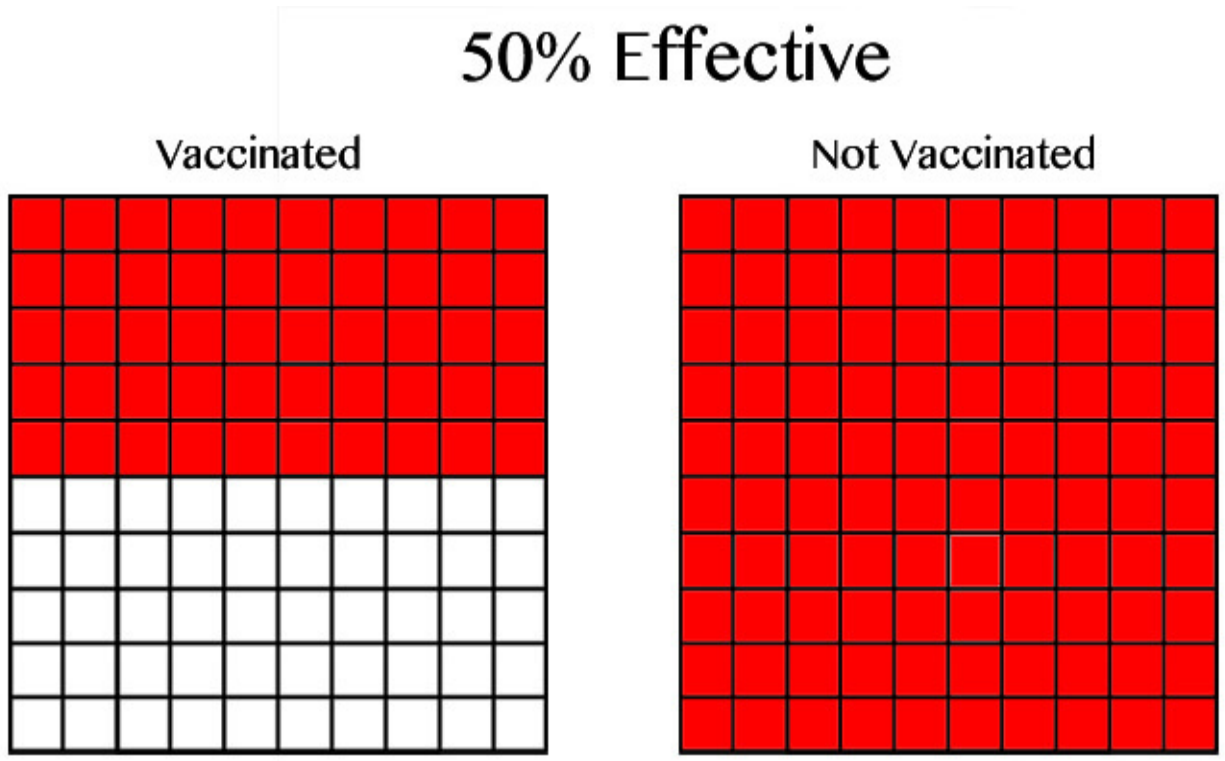
Viruses spread through shedding. This is where a person coughs, sneezes, breathes out, or otherwise expels active viruses from his or her body into the environment. This happens whenever you are sick, whether you were immunized or not. This is neither mysterious nor controversial.

What *has* caused a stir is the discovery that flu-vaccinated persons, should they also become infected with the flu, shed more than 6 times as many live viruses as do unvaccinated persons. Specifically, they shed more of the fine aerosolized particles that travel further in the air—those particles that are most able to infect others at a distance.⁵⁾

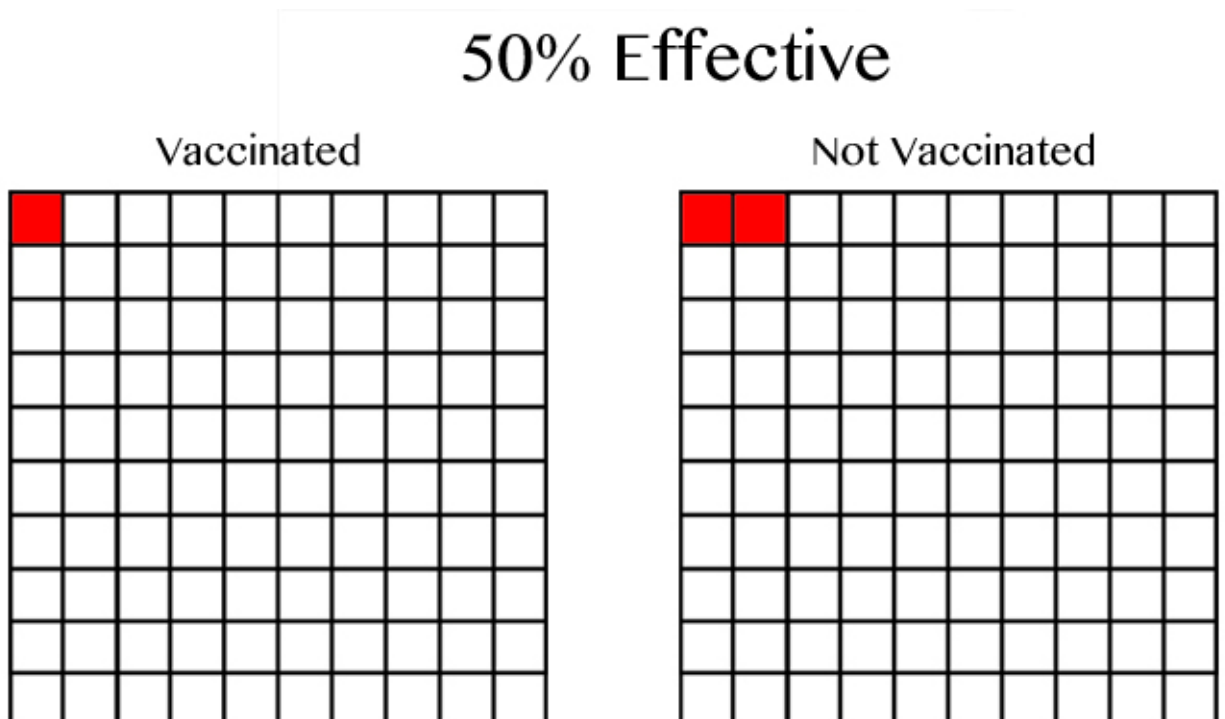
This would be trivial if a vaccine was 99.9% effective. But it becomes more significant as your vaccine effectiveness numbers drop. Consider a vaccine that was 1% effective. Almost everyone vaccinated would be at risk of infection. And if they become infected, they would be spreading the disease 6 times more liberally than normal. So now we need

to know how effective the flu vaccine really is.

How Effective Is the Flu Vaccine?



A vaccine's effectiveness is measured by comparing the infection rate of a vaccinated population with an unvaccinated population. Here's an example. If your entire population would have caught a disease, but the vaccine prevents 50 out of every 100 people from catching the disease, the vaccine has an effectiveness of 50%. So far, so good.



Now imagine it this way. If only 2 in every 100 people would have caught a disease, but the vaccine prevented half of those cases, it still has a 50% effectiveness, even though you really only reduced the number of disease cases by 1 in a hundred people. The difference between vaccinated and unvaccinated is only 1%. So vaccine effectiveness numbers may be true, but they're not always useful by themselves.

What I'm going to do is compare those numbers in a way that's more practical for determining your actual risk reduction. The numbers change every year, so I'll do this with 4 recent flu seasons. Keep in mind that these are generalized numbers and do not take into account an individual's risk factors, such as a weakened immune system or increased exposure to the flu.

2014-2015 Flu Season

A CDC study found that 1,098 of the vaccinated participants tested flu positive while 3,866 vaccinated participants tested flu negative.⁶⁾ This would mean that only 22% of the vaccinated population caught the flu. That sounds pretty good.

But let's put things into perspective by looking at the unvaccinated population. CDC studies don't go out of their way to give us this information, but by subtracting the vaccinated population in the study from the total population in the study, we get the numbers we need.

The total unvaccinated population was 4,347, while the infected number of unvaccinated people was 1,135. This means that 26% of the unvaccinated population caught the flu. That's a difference of only 4% between vaccinated and unvaccinated populations who caught the flu.

Now take into account the 6 times increase in virus shedding in vaccinated, but still infected, persons. This would make the vaccinated community 2% more likely to spread the flu virus to others. So much for herd immunity.

2015-2016 Flu Season

Doing the same math, we find that only 14.6% of the vaccinated population was infected.⁷⁾

That's an effectiveness of 85.5%. But we also find that only 23.4% of the unvaccinated population was infected. So the vaccine only prevented infection in 8.8% of the population. Spoiler Alert: This is the best result from all four years, but it's still less than a 1 in 10 improvement.

When we take increased virus shedding into account, this makes the vaccinated community around 3% less likely to spread the flu virus than the unvaccinated. Hooray

for flu vaccines! This one works out in their favor . . . just barely!

2016-2017 Flu Season

This study had information for 2 different flu strains. For influenza A (H3N2), 18.7% of vaccinated and 23.4% of unvaccinated people became infected.⁸⁾ That's a difference of only 4.7% and renders the infected population around 1.3% more contagious than the unvaccinated, thanks to increased virus shedding.

Virus B infected 8.2% of vaccinated and 14.6% of unvaccinated individuals.⁹⁾ That's a difference of 6.4% and might allow the vaccinated community to squeak by in terms of infecting others. We might be inclined to chalk this one up to a tie, or even a marginal win for the vaccine. But then I noticed something else.

This study contained a section that broke down infection numbers based on prior vaccination habits. I was about to skip over this, but something looked a little odd. So I opened up my Excel program and started comparing numbers. Want to know what I found?

The vaccine was most effective for people who had never before received a flu vaccination. It was less effective on people with a history of flu vaccination. In fact, individuals with a strong history of flu vaccination had an almost identical chance of catching the influenza A virus as someone that had never been vaccinated. The difference was only 1.3%.

For the B virus, the difference between vaccinated and unvaccinated was lowered to 4.9%.¹⁰⁾

Worse, when someone stopped taking the flu vaccine, their immune system appeared to become more vulnerable for a period of years. Individuals who were vaccinated in this year and in the past, but skipping the previous 2 years, were more likely to catch the flu than the unvaccinated group! This was true for both viruses.¹¹⁾

Unfortunately, the study did not include enough information to determine how long it took for an immune system to fully recover from vaccination. Also, a breakdown on the unvaccinated group's previous vaccination habits was not included. Were it available, I suspect we would find that those with a history of no flu vaccinations would have the lowest infection rates of any group.

Likewise, we could probably expect that those who were regularly vaccinated, but then stopped, would have a much higher rate of infection for a number of years to follow. It sheds a light on the stories we sometimes hear, such as, "I always got a flu shot. But I missed it this year, and got sicker than I ever have before! I'm never missing my shot again!"

2017-2018 Flu Season

In this study I was able to look at the results for the H1N1 and H3N2 influenzas. For the H3N2 virus, 15% of vaccinated individuals and 16% of unvaccinated individuals caught the flu.¹²⁾

That's only a 1% difference and makes the vaccinated community 5 times more likely to spread the virus.

For the H1N1 virus, 2.16% of vaccinated individuals and 5.8% of unvaccinated individuals caught the flu.¹³⁾ That's a reduction of 3.64% and makes the vaccinated community about 2.36% more likely to spread the virus.

Summary

In each of these 4 flu seasons, we determined that the flu vaccine did indeed lower your chances of catching the flu. However, the actual reduction in risk varied from 8.8% at most to 1% at the lowest. On average, a flu shot over these 4 years would reduce your chances of getting the flu by only 4.75%, but increase your chances of spreading it by 6%.

Increased virus shedding by the flu-immunized community is a further problem. It turns the idea of herd immunity on its head. In all but one year, the vaccinated community as a whole was more likely to spread the flu, even if each vaccinated individual was less likely to become infected.

This doesn't even factor in asymptomatic infections. An asymptomatic infection is an infection that has either very mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. Asymptomatic individuals don't even realize that they have the flu, meaning that they can unknowingly spread it to everyone around them. Asymptomatic cases may account for 75% of all flu cases, which further compounds the problems of increased virus shedding in the vaccinated community.

We often hear, "You need to get a flu shot so you won't spread it to people who can't be vaccinated." However, we should probably be saying the opposite: "You need to avoid the flu shot so you won't spread it to people who can't be vaccinated." But remember that we are talking specifically about the flu shot. We haven't established that this carries over to other vaccines.

Flu Vaccines and Other Infections





Vaccination doesn't seem to be the same for our bodies as actually fighting off an invading virus. Research suggests that active infection, not vaccination, might grant a degree of protection from other related viruses, including new subtypes that make the jump from animal to human hosts.¹⁴⁾

In fact, the flu vaccine appears to do the exact opposite of this, making us more vulnerable to different infections, especially those related to the lungs.¹⁵⁾

Recall how pneumonia deaths are grouped with flu deaths in CDC reports. By this grouping, it's plausible (though not confirmed) that flu vaccines could actually be increasing the number of "flu" deaths. That paints some people into a corner. For those wishing to stop taking the flu shot, there seems to exist the risk of more serious flu infections in following years. But if they keep taking the flu vaccine, they risk worse infection from other diseases and an ever-decreasing protection from the flu shot. Fortunately, several natural medicines exist to combat the flu and help us strengthen our immune systems.

You May Also Enjoy:

["Elderberry: Natural Remedy for Colds, the Flu, Inflammation ... Even Cancer!"](#)

["Garlic: Your First Home Medicine"](#) (Free e-Book)

["Making Herbal Medicine"](#) (Free 4-Part Video Series)

The Wrap-Up

Bringing up vaccination is a bit like bringing up religion or politics. It's a risky conversation topic. But I've got to ask: Do you get a yearly flu shot? Or have you gotten one in the past? Has this information given you cause for pause? What do you think about vaccination in general? Let me know all about it in the comments. I'm really eager to hear your thoughts.

(This article was originally published on February 20, 2019.)



Scott Sexton

Scott Sexton is a TGN Trailblazer, a highly experimental gardener, an unrelenting weed-eater, and a largely non-profit herbalist (much to his wife's chagrin). When Scott is not teaching foraging classes, testing out theories in the garden, or grazing in the forest, he can be found at his [Facebook page, "A Forager's Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse."](#)

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Tags: cdc, centers for disease control, flu, flu shot, immunization, immunize, influenza, scott sexton, vaccination, vaccine

Categorised in: Health & Nutrition, Medicine

This post was written by Scott Sexton

COMMENTS(60)



Blair says:

February 20, 2019 at 1:31 pm

Interesting read, Scott. I have always fallen in the area of vaccines are fine if you want them; but I don't. again I too am referring to flu vaccines. I am in my mid sixties and I have gotten the flu shot two maybe three times in my life. I have gotten the flu probably a dozen times in those years and never been hospitalized f or it just suffered it out at home. the years i got the shot i got "the flu" more than once that year and one time had it most of the winter. the worst I have had lasted two-three days and was really miserable. I work in the school system directly with students and have people sneezing and coughing around me all winter, (sometimes right in my face from about a foot away)

I have had common colds one, sometimes two a year, but rarely the flu. just my personal take.

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Scott Sexton says:

February 20, 2019 at 2:58 pm

I'm fairly libertarian on this myself. I don't want to forbid others from getting any particular vaccination. I just don't want them to be made mandatory for me or my family. We should just let people make up their own mind. Thanks for the feedback, Blair.

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Christa Suggs Suggs says:

January 20, 2020 at 1:24 pm

I haven't ever gotten a flu shot and don't get sick as often as my friends who get them. The CDC statistics do a good job of obfuscation. In addition to lumping numbers together for flu, pneumonia and other infections, it doesn't take into account that many of those counted as having the flu, never had blood tests to determine whether what they have is even the strains of flu that were in the flu shot. There are studies that did blood tests and found that the vast majority of people who thought they had the flu and often were diagnoses as such by their doctors, didn't have influenza and of those that did, many did not have the strains that were in the vaccine. I also read that the incidence of upper respiratory infections increases over 20% among those who had the flu shot.

All of this discussion also doesn't take into account what's in a flu shot besides the

virus. Aluminum, a neurotoxin and other toxins are adjuvants in flu shots. Flu shots coming from large vials often contain thimerosal as well which is mostly mercury and we all know how toxic mercury is. On top of that, vaccine manufacturers are not required to disclose all of the ingredients. I wonder why? Packaged food, shampoo etc. has to list ingredients. What are they hiding? Aluminum, by the way, is implicated in Alzheimers and dementia as well as depression. I don't see those numbers going down.

Personally I think that those who benefit the most from flu shots are pharmaceutical companies and the CDC which purchases and then has to sell millions of dollars worth of vaccines.

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Ruth Reyes-Loiacano says:

February 21, 2019 at 12:49 pm

Great article, Scott.

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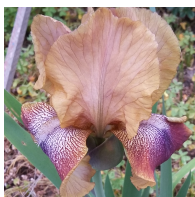


Scott Sexton says:

February 21, 2019 at 5:53 pm

Thanks, Ruth!

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Lisa K says:

February 21, 2019 at 9:44 pm

Good article, I also feel that how health a person is determines if they get the flu and how severe.

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Scott Sexton says:

February 23, 2019 at 8:45 pm

Absolutely!

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grbentleyznz says:

February 22, 2019 at 5:23 pm

Great article Scott! I'm wary of any vaccines but I as a person who gets the occasional cold while traveling, often followed by an infected throat, I usually take "Buccaline" just before the cold season. This doesn't avoid the cold but it does provide some immunity against the common secondary infections and for me it means I get over them in a day or so without antibiotics.

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Scott Sexton says:

February 23, 2019 at 8:50 pm

I'll have to look up Buccaline. I've never heard of it before. I mainly rely on herbal medicines, though I've been exploring energetic healing as well. I

sometimes think that we have this germ theory thing all backwards. We don't get sick because we were exposed to germs. The germs are always there. We get sick because something is wrong inside of us. Poor nutrition, chronic stress, depleted energy, etc. Then our bodies are out of balance with the microbes and we get sick. On the other hand, that way of thinking might not stack up against something like ebola.

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dottile46 says:

January 16, 2020 at 9:28 pm

Scott I'm in full agreement with your statement "We don't get sick because we were exposed to germs...We get sick because something is wrong inside of us."

I too have had a flu shot only twice in my 54 years; in 2000 and 2001. Both times I was pretty sick, but the second year I thought I was going to die. Of the other unvaccinated 52 years, I only had the flu real bad once, 2014. I was very sick, sick enough that I didn't really care if I died. Yet, I managed it at home and came through weaker for the wear but alive. I didn't go to the doctor or hospital to have it diagnosed, I knew I had the flu and highly suspect it was Type A based on the symptoms I saw in others that ended up with it that year.

Great job digging up the information and as usual, interestingly written.

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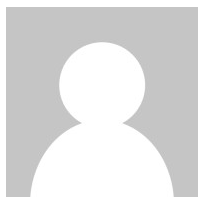
hembrasalvaje says:

February 23, 2019 at 1:35 am

personally i dont like vaccines.... any of them as there are too many questions as to their effectiveness and the risks they pose. that said i am not virulently opposed to them but i am virulently opposed to laws mandating them or much anything else for that matter that does not involve an actual crime. Theft, murder, assault, rape are all examples of actual crimes. for most other things the govt should stay the hell out of our lives (i could use a whole string of expletives here but i wont). For example speed limits, get rid of them as for many younger people there is a thrill in breaking laws such as these and they tend to only drive as fast as they feel safe if they are removed. However if someone is driving stupidly and they cause damages or harm to someone they should be personally liable for the lot (not insurance). If they kill someone it should be murder with a deadly weapon (the car).

back to vaccines, there is mounting evidence that many cases of SIDS are actually caused by vaccines. most of the deaths occur within a few weeks of these shots and some of them only a few days when the baby was perfectly healthy before the shot. It is not just SIDS cases either but also shaken baby syndrome. Both of these display symptoms that are listed in the MSDS sheets as possible adverse reactions. The HPV vaccines have killed a number of girls and left others disabled and a good number of others infertile yet in many of these cases the medical and judicial systems rally around these corporate giants that produce these things and protect them from liability. WHY?

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wcfloyd says:

February 23, 2019 at 10:38 am

I really enjoyed the Flu Shot article. I refuse flu shots! To me, it seems like I hear flu shots advertised on the radio and other places, and you can get them at Wal-Mart, pharmacy and any grocery store with a pharmacy. They even advertise “Free” with \$0.00 co-pay! And you can even get a \$10 gift certificate for groceries! Why? These places are not in the charity business. What is the incentive to push flu shots so hard? Who is paying and why? It looks like a racket to me! Follow the money! Who pays for all this advertising and incentives? Follow the flu shot money would be a good follow-up to this article

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Scott Sexton says:

February 23, 2019 at 8:51 pm

That’s a really good idea, wcfloyd! I’ll talk to my editor about it. Thanks!

[Log in to Reply](#)



MikeF says:

February 25, 2019 at 8:31 am

+1

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Scott Sexton says:

February 23, 2019 at 8:59 pm

I think you’re right on top of things, hembrasalvaje. Vaccines have ... let’s call it a

“suspicious” connection to a lot of health problems. If someone honestly thinks that a vaccine is best for them or their children, then I say, “let them have it.” But if people don’t want to vaccinate themselves or their kids, then don’t force them.

Even if I believed that vaccines were the best thing since sliced bread, I’d still support people’s right to refuse them. What could possibly give someone the right to put something in my body without my permission? Is there anything that I ought to have more legal control over than my own body? If I don’t have rights to that, I have no rights at all. (Provided that my body isn’t directly harming others, like using my body to attack someone.)

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Louise says:

March 10, 2019 at 3:10 am

I agree with you, Scott. If you don’t have freedom with your own body, then you have no freedom at all. Albeit, ones freedom stops where it would infringe on another’s freedom.

However, I am somewhat perplexed as to any need for a flu shot since there are so many medically recognized and simple cures available. Below are a few of many.

Dr. E. T. Krebs, Sr. discovered an herbal being used by the Washoe Indians in 1917 that he found stopped people from dying from the flu.

Dr. Edward R. Hays was advised in 1918 of another flu treatment that he then used to stop people from dying from the flu.

Dr. Frederick R. Klenner developed a different, but simple and quick cure for the flu in 1949.

There are many cures for the flu, but at least these three are in the medical literature along with everything needed by any medical doctor. BTW, any

competent hospital would have two of the protocols on its shelf and the herbal is readily available.

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Lexie says:

January 20, 2020 at 1:49 pm

The 'why' is profitability and liability!

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Lexie says:

January 20, 2020 at 1:54 pm

Excellent article! I haven't had a flu shot in decades but nursed my husband and son through the flu this year without catching it. Interestingly, I also participate in drinking from a communal cup almost every day at Mass but I haven't been sick in years. Two of my grandchildren were developmentally on target until receiving the "required" for school immunizations and are now severely autistic so I AM definitely biased!

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Cindy Pellusch says:

February 23, 2019 at 11:30 am

Wish you had posted the ingredients of the vaccine

Good article thanks.

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Scott Sexton says:

February 23, 2019 at 8:44 pm

That's a good point, Cindy. Vaccines contain some pretty shady stuff. The adjuvants have to be "irritating" (toxic) to the body to get the immune system to take notice. But then you have the problem of those toxins in you body, doing what they do. I've heard people say that a can of tunafish has more mercury than a flu shot. But I don't inject the tunafish directly into my veins.

If this article is popular enough, I may write a follow up. I could talk about the ingredients there, as well as the decline of diseases that preceded mainstream vaccination. Thanks for your comment.

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haileygossack says:

February 23, 2019 at 1:38 pm

Great article Scott. You addressed something that few people take the time to do. You ignored the rhetoric and looked at the evidence. The evidence does not hold up to the mantra that all vaccines are safe and effective. Especially, the flu vaccine. The majority of people trust their public health agencies, the mainstream media, and their conventional doctor's advice. This certainly makes their lives easier since taking ownership of ones health is a real commitment. However, this approach fails to take into account the complexities of corruption and greed. It runs deep. The CDC is basically a marketing arm for Pharma. They benefit financially from the sale of the flu vaccine. How can anyone in their right mind not question an organization with vested interests? Naivety I guess.

Thanks for tackling this!

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Scott Sexton says:

February 23, 2019 at 8:40 pm

Thanks! It's a tough issue to tackle without people getting emotional and just shutting off their critical thinking. It involves people's kids and things that they've participated in since they were kids. People don't like to consider that they may have been wrong, especially about their kids.

There's a big push now to make mandatory vaccination the law of the land. It's all based on pushing fear and appeals to authority. I really believe that we should let people make up their own minds, even if they choose something that we think is wrong.

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TerryBarton says:

February 23, 2019 at 10:59 pm

Good stuff. The more deeply I dive into not only flu shot effectiveness but all vaccinations, the more questions I have. The concept of vaccination is not a problem. I just want safe vaccinations. Had a few flu shots until about 15 years ago, then started to locate science based info that made me skeptical (I have had the flu twice in the last 20 years since I stopped getting the flu vaccine and my profession includes plane travel that exposes me to everything you can imagine). I have an extensive science background that helps me digest and follow the math and the structure of studies so have been able to dig deep here.

The huge question that seems to go unanswered is: Why does the CDC refuse to do the obvious properly structured study of vaccinated versus unvaccinated? It would clarify this question once and for all. They have avoided it since saying they would do it in the 1990's. We could do it right now just by collecting data of populations that are unvaxxed like the amish or home schooled which both tend to have very low vaccination rates. There have been some studies done along these lines , including outside the U.S., with results that directly contradict much of the information put out by the CDC. But if the CDC would do their own vaxxed/unvaxxed study it would be very convincing. It seems they are afraid of the answer but when I see that the CDC owns patents on 54 vaccines (at last count), I fear that the "follow the money" mantra may be driving this story more than we want to believe.

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Scott Sexton says:

March 4, 2019 at 9:32 am

Absolutely! I want a real vaccinated vs unvaccinated study. I know that these communities have other variables that will be difficult to control for. But studies always have challenges. Let's get this thing going!

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Louise says:

March 10, 2019 at 3:45 am

Hi Terry, you mentioned your extensive science background. In that regard there are many things wrong with vaccines. Here's an easy one to understand. The body's immune system is deployed where it is most vulnerable. That would not be our

cardiovascular system, which is pressurized. While the blood stream may be okay for an antidote, it is not a normal point of entrance of an infection and thus inappropriate for a vaccine. What are your thoughts?

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Elena Upton says:
January 20, 2020 at 10:33 am

You are exactly right Terry, FOLLOW THE MONEY! In my book “THE ALTERNATIVE, Your Family’s Guide to Wellness” I discuss in the opening pages how and why we have the medicine we have today. Most people have no idea we are the only country in the world that allows medicine for profit. This as a result of the Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973 signed by Nixon! It opened up America to the most corrupt medical system on the planet.

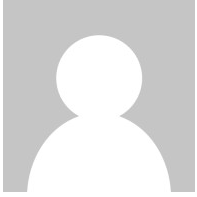
Thanks for your article Scott...I would definitely support a follow-up regarding ingredients. It is the first conversation I have with my patients. When I read the laundry list of toxic ingredients injected directly into the blood stream they ‘GET IT’ immediately.

I would also like to add that prevention is the best medicine. The Homeopathic remedies Bryonia 200c and Aconitum 200c taken at the first sign of a cold or flu is a good first-line of defense, along with drinking Sufficient C regularly. There are a number of other amazing natural remedies to keep you healthy that are far more effective than being injected with poisons because a doctor told you to.

This community knows better than any other the power of looking to nature FIRST to support your health and that of your loved ones.

P.S. ‘Herd Immunity’ is a false concept

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MikeF says:

February 25, 2019 at 8:25 am

Setting aside the previously discussed (good) points about vaccine safety and transparency...

I find it unfair that the “flu shot” gets lumped in with all of the “real vaccines”. Most vaccines offer very high immunity rates and last for a long time (10+ years) or forever. Most of these vaccines prevent diseases that are generally deadlier than the flu.

If a vaccine provides 90%+ immunity, and lasts for a lifetime... Then one can make a fairly strong mathematical case for the utility (or reward vs risk) of vaccination. I would still like to see more transparency, and the removal of thimerosal etc.

On the other hand, the flu shot is nowhere near as useful. At best, it only provides immunity for a single season. And by the CDC’s own numbers, it is usually only around 30% effective. Factor in the slight odds on getting the flu from the shot... and it becomes hard to justify why one should get a flu shot.

M

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Scott Sexton says:

March 4, 2019 at 9:29 am

Thanks, MikeF. I think we’re more-or-less on the same page here. I haven’t made up my mind completely on other vaccines, but they are certainly a different creature from the flu shot. Maybe I’ll do a follow up article and look at the numbers for them, as well as any other pros and cons. Good points.

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Christa Suggs Suggs says:

[January 20, 2020 at 5:40 pm](#)

The other vaccines vary in efficacy, but do not impart lifetime immunity. Measles vaccine is effective, but studies show the immune titers already decline at 5 years and by 10 years there's very little immunity left. That's how come fully vaccinated people can get the measles and spread it to other fully vaccinated people. China is more than 99% vaccinated to measles and yet has had measles outbreaks in recent years. The mumps is far worse with less than 60% efficacy rates. Also, in Japan, measles vaccine is given by itself with a very low adverse reaction rate, but here you can only get it in the MMR and the adverse reaction rate is very high with all 3 together.

The hepatitis B vaccine is only effective about 10 years by the pharmaceutical companies own admission, yet it's given to newborns who have practically zero risk. By the time these babies are old enough to have unprotected sex or use IV drugs, there's no immunity left anyway. So why is our medical establishment injecting extremely high amounts of aluminum into newborns on the first 24 hours of life?

The chicken pox vaccine is resulting in an epidemic of shingles, which is much more dangerous. I don't believe even getting the chicken pox gives lifetime immunity, but when the wild chicken pox goes around, every person that had it when they were younger gets a booster by exposure and that's probably also effective for shingles as well. All of this with no toxic adjuvants.

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louis2001 says:

February 26, 2019 at 10:03 pm

Very good article. I myself don't think I ever got the flu vaccine and I'm a bit over age 30. Over the years every now and again some people have suggested that I get the yearly flu vaccine and I ask them why should I. They reply that it'll help and I ask them how so. And none of them can answer that question.

Now another thing I noticed on this a couple of years ago was at a Walgreens pharmacy where they have the fliers for the flu season vaccines and it says that every time someone gets that flu vaccine half of the proceeds (monies) from that will go to the W.H.O. (World Health Organization). This was two years ago that I first noticed those notices at the pharmacy and I found that quite interesting.

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Scott Sexton says:

March 4, 2019 at 9:26 am

Ha. That's a good reply. How will it help you if you're already not getting sick? It must make you 110% not sick, right? Thanks, louis2000.

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GudrunBender says:

February 27, 2019 at 5:19 pm

Great article!

On a personal experience I can only say I had one flu shot and the worst flu ever

thereafter! 2 weeks I was sicker than sick! I had the flue a decade later and hurt from the soles of my feet to the roots of my hair, it lasted 3 days! I take 3 days over 2 weeks any time!!!

more anecdotal stories: one of my friends had to get the flu shot (hospital worker) and half the staff was out sick after their flu shots, my friend was sick as well. HOW does this help the hospitals? They must get mega \$\$ for compliance otherwise they would not want 50% of their staff off sick.

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Scott Sexton says:

March 4, 2019 at 9:24 am

Thanks for the comment, GudrenBender. I always think it's weird that people are willing to accept vaccines that have a side-effect of making you feel sick. They'll say something like, "The flu shot can't get you sick. You might feel sick, but you aren't really infected with the flu, and it's less severe than catching the actual flu." Even accepting that as true for the moment, we've still got to take into account that most people don't actually catch the flu each year. So you're suffering symptoms in the hopes of not catching a disease that you were unlikely to catch to begin with. Strange.

I have often heard about government or big-pharma bonuses for clinics administering a certain percentage or amount of flu shots. That's intriguing. I'll have to look into it further.

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celizp says:

March 3, 2019 at 8:54 pm

Really enjoyed reading this and especially loved the graphs (visuals always help). I have had 2 flu shots in my adult years and both times I had reactions (flu-like symptoms and 'really ill' for several days). Since eating mostly organic, ample fresh produce, and a healthy diet for the better part of our meals, my husband and I have not been ill for nearly 7 years, not even a cold or flu. No vaccinations anymore for us! Do you know what the ingredients are?! Sheesh. Nothing in them to even touch the flu bug.

All of this is a racket to give the pharmaceuticals more money. Which is why grocers and drug stores have signage inside and out, and the clinic associates walk around asking customers about having their flu shot. It's a trade-off and contract the stores have with the pharmaceuticals to sell more vaccines. I was told this by an employee who disagreed with the policy to bring in more customers and give more shots! If they did not meet their quota, their job was jeopardized.

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Scott Sexton says:

March 4, 2019 at 9:14 am

Thanks, celizp. I think diet and lifestyle will do a LOT more for your chances of getting the flu than a flu shot. I am familiar with the ingredients, and it's surprising how people will brush that off as "a tiny amount". Weird. I agree that there's a big money connection going on here.

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Louise says:

March 12, 2019 at 1:20 am

Hi Scott. I hope you find this of interest.

Most people do not know the history and the depth of corruption of both the medical field and their vaccines. In that regard, many may be surprised to learn of the existence of two large organizations, which are listed in a book that is over 90 years old. They are: Anti-vaccination and Medical Freedom. It is ironic that many that take the strongest positions have the least knowledge and think that these are relatively modern issues, albeit they keep getting worse.

In that book Dr. Carl S Frischkorn of Norfolk, Virginia tells of the pain suffered because of the Army Typhoid Shots.

And Dr. Benedict Lust pulls no punches of the exploitation of the public. Here is part of his article:

“I charge the medical profession with that most heinous of all crimes, compulsory vaccination, which consists of poisoning the blood of innocent human beings with the loathsome virus of a putrid sore. Notwithstanding the fact that the Royal English Commission, composed of some of the greatest scientists in England, denounced this filthy practice, yet the organized profession of medicine in England had enough power to cause the report to be practically ignored.

Also to have a review of the report struck out from its place in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and an article favoring vaccination inserted in its stead.”

That quote is directly from page 218 of “Nature’s Path 1927.”

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Scott Sexton says:

January 18, 2020 at 10:38 am

Hi Louise. I knew that some of the early vaccines had some pretty awful side effects and failures associated with them. But I didn't know about those groups. Thanks.

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Teresa Klepac says:

January 20, 2020 at 10:04 am

I am in my 60s and have had the flu shot a handful of times and have never been diagnosed as having the flu though I have had flu-like symptoms a couple of times. They really push for seniors to get the flu shot but so far I have managed to dodge the needle!

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Scott Sexton says:

January 21, 2020 at 9:29 am

Hi Teresa. Congrats on “dodging the needle”. Your body is your own. Don’t let anyone force you into something you’re not okay with. Thanks for sharing!

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stephen.1 says:

January 20, 2020 at 10:10 am

Hi Scott,

I liked this article very much. I haven’t gotten a flu shot in over twenty years and get the flu no more often than anyone else.

You mentioned pneumonia and I’d like to know if the same situation exists for the pneumonia vaccination. My doctor wanted me to get one, but so far I have remained skeptical of it’s effectiveness also.

Any information or suggested source would be genuinely appreciated.

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Scott Sexton says:

January 21, 2020 at 10:23 am

Hi Stephen. I did a little quick digging to see if I could get you some info on the pneumonia vaccine. The full set of numbers wasn't presented in any of the studies made available. At least, not in those I could find. (Full transparency on the numbers would be really helpful!) But here's what I did find. (All links below). One study on the effectiveness of a given pneumonia vaccine in adults showed it to be around 50% effective, with effectiveness diminishing greatly after a few years. This study showed the numbers of vaxxed and un-vaxxed participants who caught pneumonia and the total number of participants (42,248), but not how many total people were vaxxed and un-vaxxed. That's a really important number for seeing behind the curtain. Assuming that half the group was vaxxed and half un-vaxxed (which is a really big assumption), The difference in actual infection rate between vaxxed and un-vaxxed groups would be an increase from 0.12% to 0.21%, or an increase of 0.09%. That would mean the vaccine reduces your chances of catching pneumonia by just under a tenth of a percent, in a given year.

Keep in mind, this is all back-of-the-envelope type math with some (unfortunately necessary) assumptions in place of key numbers. And we're looking at a particular type of pneumonia, not all types. We would need more information to get the full picture.

The CDC says that around 250,000 people in the U.S. catch pneumonia each year, and around 50,000 people die from it. That sounds really big until you factor in that the current population of the U.S. is around 330,149,000. While it's terrible for anyone to catch pneumonia, these numbers give each person a 0.075% chance of catching it in a given year. The chances of dying from it would be 0.015%. According to those numbers, if you lived 100 years, you'd have a 7.5% chance of

catching pneumonia and 1.5% chance of dying from it.

Obviously, numbers don't always match real world experiences. I've had pneumonia twice. Both times, I was living under some pretty awful stress, and was not participating in other headful life habits. And even the healthiest of us will occasionally get sick. A low chance isn't the same as no chance.

In an attempt to be more transparent than the CDC, I'll put my sources down below. And unlike those people calling for mandatory vaccination without consent, I'll let you make your own decisions. Thanks for reading.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25785969>

<https://www.cdc.gov/pneumonia/prevention.html>

<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/us-population/>

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Sandy Jones says:

[January 20, 2020 at 10:33 am](#)

I'm 70 years old and have never had a flu shot! I get the flu sometimes but have never had a serious case. I chalk this up to growing up on a farm and eating healthy food from a garden in my formative years. I also keep a garden now and take supplements such as Vitamin C, ACV, and Elderberry

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Scott Sexton says:

[January 21, 2020 at 10:24 am](#)

Sounds like you have a good recipe for health! I would expect that you're probably

more flu-proof (or flu-resistant) than most people getting the shot.

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lucygabzdyl says:

January 20, 2020 at 10:50 am

I totally agree that we should have sovereignty over our own bodies. I have been following the vaccine debate for many years and the more information I get the less convinced I am. I've never had a flu shot and never intend to have one, I've only ever had the flu once, many, many years ago and I just stayed in bed for a week, job done. I look after my health and would far rather rely on my immune system. I haven't had any kind of medication in 30 years!

For a follow up article check out The Truth About Vaccines, the film For The Greater Good which has now disappeared from Amazon Prime and this recent article from Ty Bollinger

<https://thetruthaboutcancer.com/chemo-truthers-new-anti-vaxxers>

[/?utm_campaign=join-free&utm_medium=email&utm_source=daily-content-ttac&](https://thetruthaboutcancer.com/chemo-truthers-new-anti-vaxxers/?utm_campaign=join-free&utm_medium=email&utm_source=daily-content-ttac&utm_content=chemo-truthers-new-anti-vaxxers&a_aid=5a84a1f683718&mpweb=144-8520258-686010691)

[utm_content=chemo-truthers-new-anti-vaxxers&a_aid=5a84a1f683718&](https://thetruthaboutcancer.com/chemo-truthers-new-anti-vaxxers/?utm_campaign=join-free&utm_medium=email&utm_source=daily-content-ttac&utm_content=chemo-truthers-new-anti-vaxxers&a_aid=5a84a1f683718&mpweb=144-8520258-686010691)

[mpweb=144-8520258-686010691](https://thetruthaboutcancer.com/chemo-truthers-new-anti-vaxxers/?utm_campaign=join-free&utm_medium=email&utm_source=daily-content-ttac&utm_content=chemo-truthers-new-anti-vaxxers&a_aid=5a84a1f683718&mpweb=144-8520258-686010691) which includes to a link to a video of Maurice Hilleman "In this video, Hilleman openly admits that vaccines given to Americans were contaminated with leukemia and cancer viruses. In response, his colleagues (who are also recorded) break out into laughter and seem to think it's hilarious. They then suggest that because these vaccines are first tested in Russia, they will help the U.S. win the Olympics because the Russian athletes will all be "loaded down with tumors." (Thus, they knew these vaccines caused cancer in humans.)

I was already aware that of the fact that AIDS was transferred to humans through the polio vaccine made from monkeys infected with SIDS and a mass vaccination programme in West Africa which WHO later denied all knowledge of, yet this video still

horrified with their callous disregard for human suffering as a result of their actions.

I also saw a very interesting interview with a Canadian woman whose son received a meningitis vaccine when they were living in Scotland that resulted in narcolepsy. Information of the link between the vaccine and narcolepsy was only made public because of a court case. I believe there were 1300 cases in all before the vaccine was withdrawn.

Finally, more and more doctors are starting to voice their doubts as to the efficacy of vaccines, despite such strong opposition from governments and the pharmaceutical industry.

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Scott Sexton says:

January 21, 2020 at 11:06 am

Thank you for your additions and comments! There's a lot to chew threw in there. I'll look forward to digging into it.

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avmercer says:

January 20, 2020 at 11:24 am

My crossword playing, puzzle loving, quick witted 87 year old grandmother lost her mind the day she got the flu shot. She told me she felt odd, so I took her to the ER, and they couldn't find anything wrong with her. She was never the same again, instant dementia. Her doctor and my aunt referred to it as a stroke, but the ER hadn't found any such thing.

I've never trusted the flu shot (or hand sanitizers). Especially when they say it's a guess at which strain will be out that year.

I've always caught many colds or flus throughout the year. In 2014 the flu hit my family so hard, I decided it was time to take our health into our own hands and started looking into herbal health plus figure out how this body works after 40 years of lugging it around.. Now I notice we are exposed to sick people/germs all the time, but it's when we've overscheduled or otherwise ran down our immunity that we start to feel sick. A gargle with apple cider vinegar usually stops it in its tracks, and now I rarely get sick.

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Scott Sexton says:

January 21, 2020 at 10:27 am

So sorry to hear about your grandmother. I think you're on the right track with your health care. I wish more people would take more responsibility for their own health. Thanks for your comment.

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Barbara Roberts says:

January 20, 2020 at 11:30 am

Hi Scott – I've enjoyed your articles but this is the first one that inspired me to comment. I got the flu shot two times when I was in my 20's. The second time, I got the worst case of the flu I have ever had only a few days later. When my fever reached 103, I thought I was going to die. When it reached 105, I wished I could die. When it finally got back down to 103, I thought it was wonderful. It took me a week or more to get well enough to go back to work, and even then I still had symptoms. After that, I never got a flu shot again

and I am almost 69 now.

In the past 20 years, I've come down with the flu two times, in 2004 when my stepmom died and I had to bring my dad home to GA. Then in 2008 when he finally passed away after getting Alzheimer's. Other than those two extremely stressful times, I never got sick with either colds or the flu because I have adopted healthy diet and lifestyle changes.

I'm giving you a link to a very enlightening article about what actually caused the extremely high number of 1918 flu deaths, which blew my mind! Also, I don't understand the "herd immunity" argument. If you have gotten a flu shot and I haven't, how in the world can I give you the flu? If you believe in the efficacy of the vaccine, how could anyone else cause you to get the illness?

Okay, you now know which side of the aisle I'm on with flu vaccines so I'll stop my rant. Thanks for giving me the forum to express my thoughts. Here's the link to the article:

<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2018/12/06/homeopathic-remedies-for-influenza.aspx>

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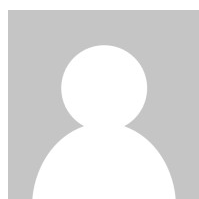
Scott Sexton says:

January 21, 2020 at 11:02 am

I'm actually on your side with "herd immunity". I didn't have space in one article to really go into it, so I gave it the benefit of the doubt. In theory it is a good idea. If you had a vaccine that made people completely immune to some disease, but it only worked for 99% of the population, and if 100% of the population took it, then only 1 in 100 people could possibly transmit it, making that 1% of the population much less likely to catch it. Like I say, it sounds good on paper. But real life gets more complicated. We have negative side effects to vaccines – with both the severity and frequency being hotly debated. We see a decline in a vaccine's

effectiveness after a number of years. Also, vaccines seem to allow the immune system to weaken over time, rather than strengthening it as would typically happen in true infections. There's also the phenomenon of increased viral shedding (which may or may not be limited to the flu vaccine), and incidences of very real infections being caused by the vaccine they were supposed to prevent. While we are presented with a nice, simple version of herd immunity, the full story has a lot of complications.

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Walter says:

[January 20, 2020 at 1:09 pm](#)

If I ever had the flu shot, it must be more than 50 years ago. You are what you eat, simple as that.

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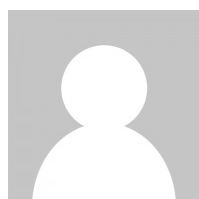


Scott Sexton says:

[January 21, 2020 at 10:28 am](#)

True story! Eat junk; feel like junk.

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myskere says:

[January 20, 2020 at 1:52 pm](#)

This is an excellent article. I used to work in a clinic where we had 2 choices, get a flu shot

or wear a mask for 6 months. The 1st few years I got the shot. I was the sickest I've ever been. So I chose the mask. I haven't had a flu shot in years. I chose to change my lifestyle. I eat cleaner and healthier. During the cold and flu season I drink herbal teas and diffuse essential oils daily. I also found an essential oil combo called "Flu Shot" that I apply on my wrists daily. All I can say is this works for me and I couldn't be healthier.

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Scott Sexton says:

January 21, 2020 at 11:09 am

Hello, Myskere. Thanks for sharing with us! We have a lot of choices when it comes to caring for our health. I wish that certain members of the mainstream medical paradigm would acknowledge that there's isn't the only possibility.

What oils are in your "flu shot"?

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rbissett says:

January 20, 2020 at 3:39 pm

Way back in '76 I had my last flu shot. It was Swine Flu then. Many died or were paralyzed from the shot. Decided to take my chances with the flu thereafter. They guess 12% effectiveness for those over 65. Wonder why that would be the case? Personally, I take D3/K2, Rieshi and elderberry. At the first sign of something... in a couple ounces of water five drops of oregano oil/olive oil, 50/50. Every year you read about schools 100% vaccinated; fully protected, right? Then they have an outbreak of flu or measles, etc. and have to shut down to stop it. The explanation...Well, we never said it was 100% effective. Yet, at the time of the shot it was not mentioned that it might not work. We are left with

the impression of full protection, a modern medical miracle. Name three industries that are protected by government from law suits by their injured customers. Let's see... Pharma and, uh, uh, um...

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Scott Sexton says:

January 21, 2020 at 11:13 am

Sounds like you have a good supplement, herb, and oils regimen!

Too true about the schools. And sometimes, it's the vaccination that spreads the outbreak. But the unvaccinated kids/parents always get blamed. .

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Iris Weaver says:

January 20, 2020 at 6:24 pm

Maybe 20 or more years ago, I got a flu shot one or two years in a row. I still got the flu despite having gotten the shot, so I decided it was pointless to get it and haven't done so since. Some years I get really sick, and some I don't. I think the best way to cope is to keep my immune system healthy and working well.

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Scott Sexton says:

January 21, 2020 at 11:15 am

Thanks Iris! And I agree with you. Cultivating overall health is far superior to using a

shot to try to patch over an unhealthy lifestyle.

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Mary says:

January 23, 2020 at 11:11 pm

Loved the article. I wish you'd publish it in the Winston-Salem Journal. It may open some people's eyes, which is long overdue.

[Log in to Reply](#)



dipat2005 says:

November 23, 2020 at 12:52 pm

I am 75 and have gotten the flu shot for the last 12 years or so. I am not getting the flu shot this year. I watched a documentary on vaccinations not too long ago and you would have to weigh 550 pounds to be able to absorb the mercury (it is used in the manufacturing process and doesn't have to be accounted for) in the list of ingredients! I haven't had the flu in years but then again I didn't have the flu most years I didn't take the flu shot. I haven't had some of the other vaccines I am supposed to take because of the problems with the ingredients and from people telling me they had the disease for which they were vaccinated. I also read an article somewhere that said that 50% of adults do not want to have anything to do with taking a Corona virus vaccine! I think they are very smart.

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hilltophaven says:

March 2, 2021 at 9:45 pm

I used to get a flu shot every year. As I got older, my reaction to the shot got worse and I would end up with the flu. The doctor would write out a prescription for antibiotics and say, “Imagine how sick you’d be if you didn’t have the shot”.

My flu would end up being pneumonia – I’d get a prescription – have another infection from the antibiotic – hear the same platitude and that would be my winter. Echinacea was my best friend during those years.

I read something similar to this piece about how the flu shot doesn’t work as well as the years pass – how your own immune system doesn’t work right because of the shots and how vitamins can help.

I didn’t take the shot that year, but did take vitamins. I got the flu but it didn’t turn to pneumonia. It’s been over a decade since I had a flu shot. I take vitamins most of the time, especially in the cooler months to help build and support my immune system. I haven’t had the flu for over a decade and will never get another flu shot, nor will I get that gene altering shot that they refer to as a flu shot.

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