

# OPTING OUT OF FLU JAB A SICK NOTION

The theories anti-vaxxers spout simply don't stand up to examination so don't be fooled – go get your shot

If you're an anti-vaxxer, you must be sick.

In the head.

News that a whooping cough outbreak has hit a Gold Coast hotspot for anti-science/pro-illness extremists – with rates of the virus more than triple the average for this time of the year – should come as no surprise.

Lie down with dogs, wake up with fleas. Live with anti-vaxxers, wake up with disease.

But it's not just the fringe element at fault here. Too many of us are complacent when it comes to the annual flu jab.

We're in the midst of one of the worst flu seasons ever, with the Gold Coast alone recording almost 3000 lab-confirmed cases, four times as many than in 2018 ... and far above the five-year mean of 868.

And we've yet to reach peak flu season.

Our whole family caught the flu in January after being exposed to a northern hemisphere winter – a protective jab wasn't an option before we departed, and by the time we arrived home we were already infected.

And it was horrible.

So as soon as this southern flu season rolled around, we all rolled up our sleeves and were happily injected.



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A sore arm beats a stint in hospital – or worse – any day.

And yet I find myself regularly having conversations with other parents as I try to convince them that the immunisation is not just safe for their children, but helps keep other children safe as well.

Not that I'm a medical professional, but my arguments are certainly backed by medical professionals – and medical evidence. Yet just last week, one parent was seeking advice from social media as to whether or not she should book herself and her children in to get their flu shots.

Shockingly – or not – opinion was divided.

One commenter advised that the vaccine was full of poison and instead recommended that essential oils would do the trick.

Essential oils. Really?

Look, they're not going to hurt – unless you use them as an alternative to an actual vaccine.

Many provided links to anti-vax websites, while others argued that most flu deaths occur in those immunised. Of course, no actual data was provided to prove these points. Because it doesn't exist. (The website set up by your cousin in Nimbin doesn't count either.)

The truth is that despite the record number of flu cases this year, most of us won't contract it. And the worst cases will inevitably effect the very young and the old.

But then there are the very unlikely cases.

Like the fit and otherwise healthy mum Jacinta Foulds from Toowoomba, who was aged just 35 when she died from flu complications last week. Her distraught husband Daniel told media that he regretted not getting the whole family vaccinated against the flu.

"If I could take my time back again and get even the

slightest chance that this would not have happened to me and my family and my wife, then I would have jabbed us all," he said.

"The last words I ever spoke to her she told me she was sorry, that she loved me. She was so, so sick and it all came from the flu."

Forget essential oils, not

even the best care from a team of doctors and nurses armed with the latest weaponry of medicine could save her.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. And it's worth whatever infinitesimal risk the flu vaccine prevents.

Speaking of which, other than a legitimate allergic reaction, what are the real

risks? According to actual scientific data, none.

Sure, you might still get the flu – but chances are it will be mild.

Unfortunately, the flu is one of the most difficult illnesses to vaccinate against because it is changing all the time.

One vaccine will protect

