

The Truth about Covid Part 2

Transcript

Welcome to A Dose of the Healthy Truth podcast with Dr. Cecil Bennett. Learn more about this podcast and other episodes at cecilbennettmd.com. Now here's Dr. Bennett.

Welcome back to part two of my Covid podcast. I did receive some feedback from the first podcast. I guess one of the greatest concerns that people had was: Why are you beating up on the president? Why are you beating up on the CDC Director? You know my response is: you know I live this pandemic every day with my patients. I have patients that have been with me for quite a long time and they're confused. They don't know where to go to get the vaccine. I have no place to send them. There are those who are skeptical about taking the vaccine. So I have to deal with those issues and you know, I believe the purpose of a citizen is to always question government, whether you agree or disagree with their policies. It is still our responsibilities as Americans to make sure that the best policies are presented. Which is why, I stress the need for more primary care physicians to be involved with this vaccine distribution process. I listened to a broadcast again today from the leaders of the Covid vaccine roll out and again primary care doctors are excluded. They talk about pharmacies, they talk about Walmart being involved now and some other private locations, but again nothing about primary care provider. So I'm going to keep hammering that point home until someone actually listens and allows primary care providers to actually vaccinate America. Just by the numbers seventy five percent of all Americans have a primary care provider. How easy would it be to just send the vaccine to us and we vaccinate our patients? It would all be done in eight to ten weeks. One thing I'm glad of is that the governor of the state of Georgia, Governor Kemp, has

decided to vaccinate teachers and making teachers a priority, which is great. I said earlier that Walmart is now involved in the process of vaccinating America, and one of the questions I saw posed to the CEO of Walmart was will his staff get vaccinated and he said well, he hoped so. Here we can have a plan to vaccinate the staff of Walmart, but there's no national plan to vaccinate teachers. It just makes no sense to me, but I'm glad our governor took the bull by the horns and has made an executive decision to vaccinate teachers. Man, they are a vital resource to our country. There's no getting around that. I mean to me they're as important as any front-line provider is during the time of this pandemic. Why would we not want to make them go back to a safe environment? Why wouldn't we want them to have peace of mind? Initially the CDC put out these guidelines to what they expect to take place in schools. For schools to open safely and why teachers will not need to be vaccinated. If these guidelines were put in place, they wanted to make sure that ninety percent of everyone at the school had a mask. They wanted to make sure that there were testing sites setup, that there were sanitation areas, that classrooms could be cleaned on a regular basis during the day and they wanted to overhaul the ventilation system. If all these things were put in place and teachers can go back to school safely, schools can't afford to buy books how they going to afford to put all these mitigation steps to CDC once in place before teachers will feel safe to go back to school. It just made no sense whatsoever. Schools are not buying books, teachers are buying supplies for their students, and we expect ninety percent of the school system to be able to comply with these mitigation standards. To overhaul the entire ventilation system of a school that's just crazy, but again I got to give props to our governor. He stepped up and he's going to vaccinate teachers from K through 12, which is absolutely

fantastic. Let's face fact. Virtual learning was just not working very well for many communities, particularly poorer communities that did not have consistent internet access. What about working mothers? I mean think about what working mothers went through during this time of pandemic. They have their children to take care of, they have to go to work, and now they dealt with virtual learning. I just don't know how they did it. I mean, I think, they're absolutely remarkable, and as far as teachers getting vaccinated. Why wouldn't we want to make sure they're vaccinated? Why wouldn't we want them to have the peace of mind of knowing that they are safe, and their family is safe? I'll compare it to when I was vaccinated, I went a year without, wearing a mask with my patients, examining patients. Talking with [my] patients in a little room and [to] be honest with you, I was worried. I mean you know. I was worried that there was a possibility that someone wasn't wearing their mask properly or while I'm examining someone, if I'm, asking them to open their mouth and stick out their tongue, they can't be wearing a mask. So I have to look in their throat and that's the point where you get the full effect of the virus if any of them are positive. You know I had to deal with that for a year, but it was necessary because again you know that's what I do as a family physician. After I got vaccinated, I felt so much better. I was protected now, now I could see my patients. I could interact with my patients and I had peace of mind that at least I was vaccinated. Why shouldn't teachers have the same peace of mind when dealing with our children? Why don't we want them to feel comfortable with going around children that may be sniffing or running nose or having some other issue, but the teacher needs to be close to them to make a point or to help them. Why wouldn't we? Why wouldn't we want the teachers to have peace of mind during that time to be vaccinated. Again, all props to our

governor for stepping up and doing that. One final thing I want to say about teachers, is that my daughter's a teacher. She is a proud University of Georgia graduate she got her bachelor's degree in, I think it was, middle school education and she's now a counselor at a middle school in sorry, she's a counselor at in elementary school, I keep getting that wrong, in Griffin, Georgia. She loves her job, I'm sure she's excited about going back to school and I'm sure she's even more excited over the fact that she will be vaccinated. That's great! One thing we keep hearing to is "we need to go with the science". "We need to listen to the scientists". Well let me ask you something: what does that mean? What does that really mean? "Listen to the scientists"? You know I've gone to several medical conferences in my life, and I can tell you that a lot of those conferences are not down, drag out events with different opinions and various topics. We don't all agree about how to treat patients. We don't agree about certain diagnoses. We don't agree about several things when it comes to science and medicine, but that's fine. We're allowed to disagree, and people make their points, but it's really annoying to me when I keep hearing "we need to listen to the scientists". Well scientists have differences in their belief systems. Some scientists believe right now, we've [have] herd immunity. Sometimes some scientists believe we will never achieve herd immunity because the virus keeps changing. Some scientists feel the worst is behind us. Other scientists are saying: Well, no, there's a surge coming that we have to worry about. So you know just when you hear "listen to the scientists", just let it go in one ear and go out the other, because we all differ in what we believe it just a matter of listening to all the information. Making an informed decision and an example again is: Governor Kemp, he listened to what the CDC said about mitigation standards. He realized that that would pretty much

be impossible for the majority of schools to follow. He realized that parents had to go back to work. He realized that virtual learning would not be the best way to continue to educate our children and what was the best solution? Immunize our teachers. That's using the science and using all the information is available to make an informed leadership decision. There's a lot changing with the virus. As you know, you keep hearing about this word variants or variances, a lot of people get confused about what a variant is, what it means, etc. Well, variants are mutations or changes to the gene structure, usually on the outside of the shell. They're these things called spike proteins that stick off the virus and those things change, when they change the body doesn't recognize these changes. We're not able to defeat the virus in some cases, depending on how dramatic the changes are. Fortunately, the mutations that are currently of concern i.e. the UK variant, the South African variant, and the Brazilian variant seemed to be susceptible to the vaccine, which is great the current vaccine. But let's talk about the variant for a minute, because as I said before, you can have mild variations in the surface proteins. You can have moderate modifications you could have severe modifications. With mild modifications or moderate changes, the vaccine would be effective, but what are we finding now in terms of the changes when it comes to the UK virus? Sorry, the UK variant we're finding out that those changes to the surface actually means that there are more people who are more susceptible or who can actually be infected with the virus. Think of it as being a little bit more sticky. Imagine if I threw a whole bunch of ping pong balls on a table and on some of those ping pong balls, I had one piece of tape that was two sided. The two-sided tape [helps] the ping pong ball to stick to the table, on other balls I had like six or seven different pieces of two-sided tape. If I threw them all on the table, the

ones that are more sticky they would stay on the table. So it's the same thing. We look at these variants and the UK variants seems to be more sticky, meaning that, if you're exposed to it, it sticks in your nasal passages longer than the common virus that we're currently dealing with in the United States. The longer [it] stays around the more sticky it is the more likelihood it is going to be more contagious. They realize they have found out that seventy percent of, excuse me, there is a seventy percent increase in the UK variant infecting someone else. So that's the concern I mean seventy percent more contagious is a problem. That's seventy percent more people likely to get Covid if they're exposed to someone with the UK variant. What is also concerning with the UK variant is that they're not absolutely certain that there is an increase mortality with it. There's increased morbidity, but they don't know about increased mortality. Now increase morbidity means illness, means being sick with a disease process, that's morbidity. Increase mortality means death from a particular illness. Right now the jury is still out as to whether or not the UK variant actually cause more death than the US version of it. Now why is this a concern? Well, we now know it's expected, that the UK variant may actually become the dominant strain of the virus in the United States by the end of March. That's very concerning because you're dealing with a virus now that is more contagious and maybe even more deadly than the current strain that's in the United States. This is why we need to get people vaccinated as quickly as possible. When you're vaccinated it removes you from the equation. You don't have to worry about the UK variant you don't have to worry about any other variant, because you're vaccinated. You are safe, I'm not saying a hundred percent certain that there isn't a possibility that you may get some mild disease in the future from some variant or some change in the virus.

But for the most part, you are safe. When we are looking at the different vaccines, there are different options. Let me just say this in general; when it comes to vaccines, I've said this over and over again, we need to get people vaccinated as quickly as possible. It does not matter which vaccine you get. It is more important to be vaccinated. That is the critical thing that needs to happen. Now what are the different types of vaccines that are out there? We know there is the Pfizer vaccine, and Moderna vaccine. Those are really the more common ones that we've come accustomed to. Those are two dose vaccines, so basically you get your first dose and three to four weeks later you get your second dose to be able to get the full immunization of the vaccine. Now, let's be clear about something: The efficacy rate of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine's were touted to be ninety five percent. Okay, that's ninety five percent of individuals who are not either from South Africa, or from Brazil, or were not included in the UK variant. Now, why is that important? Well, there's a new vaccine out there, that Johnson Johnson vaccine and that vaccine is coming back at about sixty-five to seventy-five, somewhere in that in that ballpark of efficiency and people are concerned. Well, no, I want the one. That's ninety five percent effective. I don't want this, this Johnson Johnson vaccine, but hold on there. The Johnson and Johnson vaccine was tested on patients in the UK or in Brazil, and also in the UK that may have experienced other variants. So that's why their efficacy was not as high as the Moderna or the Pfizer vaccine, if you think through the process. Okay, but let's also know this, that anyone who's gotten the Johnson Johnson vaccine, they may develop a mild form of Covid or moderate form of Covid, but there were no hospitalizations, no severe disease and no death and really that's the bottom line. That getting a Johnson Johnson vaccine may not have the same efficacy as the

Pfizer or Moderna vaccine's, but again we are talking about apples and oranges, because who knows what the efficacy of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine's would be if they were tested against the UK, the South African, and Brazilian stream? We don't know, but we do know that with the Johnson Johnson vaccine, there has been no hospitalizations or death reported. That's fantastic news, plus the Johnson Johnson vaccine is one dose, one and you're done where Moderna and Pfizer vaccine's are two doses. For people who are skeptical about being vaccinated it'll be great to get that one shot of Johnson Johnson vaccine into their arm as soon as possible even when Pfizer and Moderna even though there are two doses, it is critical that we get as many people vaccinated quickly. So when you look at the science and again this where scientists vary. You know the studies that were done say it's two to three weeks and you have to get that second dose in the in the third week or the fourth, sorry, third or fourth week that's when the studies were done. But let's cool our jets here a little bit. There have been other studies to show that similar vaccines like another vaccine, astrazeneca vaccine, was still affective after the second dose [administered] after twelve weeks. We may have done the studies on the vaccine second dose at three to four weeks, but the other data available that tells us that if we waited a few more weeks, it's not the end of the world. Why is that important? I would rather more people get vaccinated and using that second dose. That was supposed to be given, someone who already got the first dose and then letting that first of the people wait a few more weeks than to fully vaccinate a group of people and have another group that is not vaccinated at all. That is just not a good plan, but the bottom line is whatever vaccine you can get you need to get now. I heard something as well and I assume it's true because I've heard it through multiple media outlets, that fifty

percent of seniors are vaccinated and that's great, but I don't know what fifty percent. That is, because I have a whole bunch of senior patients and I can guarantee you that nowhere close to fifty percent of those patients are vaccinated. They don't even know where to go to get the vaccine. I have about nine hundred Medicare patients and I can guarantee you four hundred and fifty of them have not been vaccinated. Yet I check with some of my peers and ask them if fifty percent of your seniors been vaccinated and their response is no. So you know, I don't know where this fifty percent is coming from for these seniors, but you know it ain't coming from south Georgia that much I can tell you. Let's move on to another point here when it comes to conspiracy and skepticism. I've heard them all from my patients I'm going to go through some of them. Let's talk about skepticism first, what people are saying, they rushed the vaccine and you know I want to wait. That's why. They rush the vaccine so I want to wait to see how effective it's going to be or if anyone gets sick, which my response is so would you rather get Covid while you're waiting. I mean what makes better sense to get the vaccine and go with the science I'm actually going to go with the science on this one that says you will be protected or the wait to see what happens. The truth is I've had patients who have waited because they were skeptical, and they and their family have come down with Covid. Some of them serious requiring hospitalization. So I would strongly suggest if you have an opportunity to get the vaccine, even though you're skeptical trust me you're better off being vaccinated than not being fast vaccinated and placing yourself at risk. So that's the skeptical people when it comes to the vaccine. What about the conspiracy theories now, I'm going to tell you real conspiracy theories that people have told me. So these are not made up. These are people, some of my patients and of course I won't use

any names. Because that would be unethical among other issues. I had one patient that said I saw on the Internet that you know when you get the vaccine there are these little nano grams or something that the government put in the vaccine where they can track you. That's the whole thing. know the government's going to track you with these little nanograms or Nanama I don't know what it is, some Nano something or whatever. You can be tracked that way that's why they want [you] to do it. THAT'S NOT TRUE! THAT'S NOT TRUE! So, let's just move on to think about how complicated that would be. First of all, I think we would have heard of this Nano technology sometime in the past if it actually existed and it wouldn't be rolled out in a made up pandemic to all of a sudden, be able to control people, know where they are, but you know well table that one. Another one I've heard is that, this is all the Bill Gates thing and you know, Bill Gates is involved in vaccines, and this is a way for him to make more money from vaccines. Let's talk about Bill Gates for a second, this is an individual who was decided to donate all the money he's made in his life to mankind, tens of billions of dollars. This is a man that has changed the process of disease on continents affecting AIDS, affecting hepatitis, affecting malaria, affecting water access. I mean incredible. The projects that the Gates foundation has done when it comes to the world population. I don't think Bill Gates is sitting around worrying about making more money from you. I just don't think that's at the top of his agenda. I mean is it just me, but who am I to think any differently? Another thing I've heard you know from some African American patients is that you know this is just something to experiment with black people again, and you know we know what happened in Tuskegee, and you know we don't want that to happen again to us and we're just going to be experimented on and that's why they want us to get

vaccinated. Let me clarify this whole Tuskegee thing, because there is a lot of misinformation about the Tuskegee experiment and what it actually was. It was in Alabama there was a study that was put together by the Public Health Department and the CDC to look at what happens in an asymptomatic African American male who had Syphilis. So in normal language, they were looking at people or African-American men who had Syphilis, who didn't have any symptoms of it. No sign of it whatsoever completely asymptomatic and wanted to see what that would do to their bodies over time. Did it affect their heart, did it affect their liver, did it affect their lungs, effect their skin, or effect their brain? Now initial in 1932 there was no cure for Syphilis. So basically, it's just following a disease process which would not be unethical, but in the mid 1900's penicillin was discovered, and Penicillin is proven to be very effective against Syphilis, at any rate we still use it today to treat Syphilis, but the public health department and the CDC decided that they would not treat the four hundred African-American men that had Syphilis. They would continue them in the study without treatment. That is unethical. That is immoral among other things. So they continued to follow these men without treating them not for ten years, not for twenty years, not for thirty years, but for forty years from 1932-1972 they continued the experiment. Women were infected, children were born with Syphilis. Men died, they didn't have to die, it was awful, and it wasn't until the early 1970's when this experiment was exposed and it was stopped. There was very little compensation for the families. There was compensation, but not enough for what they went through. That was horrible, but that was not a situation where men were injected with Syphilis. These were men who already had it about, four hundred, and they were just not treated. They were not treated; they were not infected with

Syphilis. Now look at where we are with Covid. The federal government is saying we know that minorities, particularly Black and Brown people, have three times more likely hood to be hospitalized with three times more likely to die from Covid, so we're going to make an effort to make sure you're, vaccinated and they are making the push. I mean I have to give the Biden administration credit they are, making every effort they can to make sure that minorities are vaccinated because of the increase risk of hospitalization increase risk of death. So this is a situation with the government is saying we want to treat you, we're not excluding you we're including you in the process, and we want to treat you to prevent you from getting Covid. So, in my opinion, when you get vaccinated, you are honoring those men who were in the Tuskegee experiment who did not have an opportunity to be treated you're honoring them by being vaccinated. If you choose not to get vaccinated, to me, you're dishonoring them this is an opportunity for the government to make up for some of the sins of the past and by not getting vaccinated, you're dishonoring their memory. In my opinion, now you may disagree that's fine, but those are the facts, so everyone who's eligible needs to be vaccinated. The final thing I want to say is this is that we are in a: high demand and low supply environment. Right now, it's very difficult for a lot of people who are on pins and needles wanting to be vaccinated, but I can guarantee you. Well guarantee's a strong word, I think Joe Namath guaranteed a super bowl, but he won so I'm going to guarantee you. I am guaranteeing you that within the next sixty days, we're going to have more vaccine than we can actually distribute, I'll make that guarantee. And why do I say that? Well, you know in my previous career before I went to medical school, I was a pharmaceutical corrupt with Merk, which at the time was the largest pharmaceutical company in the

world, and I can tell you this pharmaceutical companies know how to roll out product. Once they have the system set up and the methodology done, they will crank out this vaccine. So we're going to go from having a shortage of vaccine that have been tens of millions to even a hundred million doses ready to go. I just hope the government, the federal government is ready. I hope that state government is ready. I hope that by this time a little light bulb goes off, they realize they need to go ahead and make sure that physicians, like me, have access to vaccines that I can give it to my patient and why, again, all the skepticism that is out there. If a patient is with me, I can convince them and vaccinate them all these conspiracy theories that are out there, if a patient comes up with some weird conspiracy theories, I can debunk it and vaccinate them right there on the spot. That to me is also of great value to why pcps or primary care providers to include nurse practitioners and physician assistants should be involved in vaccinating America. Well, that's my two cents for the day. I hope it was informative. I mean that's the whole reason I do these podcasts, because what I'm discussing you are not going to hear on television, your not going to hear it on the radio, and I hope it has value your life and do whatever you need to do to get vaccinated that we can all go on with our lives. Thanks for joining me on this latest episode of A Dose of the Healthy Truth with Dr. Cecil Bennett hope to hear from you soon.

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