

## Anti-vaxxers

by BRIAN LOCKHART

So, you hear that your neighbor, good friend, and occasional motorcycle riding buddy, Bob, three doors down has taken sick.

Being a good neighbor, concerned friend, and tough motorcycle riding guy, you do the usual thing and pick some peaches from your backyard tree and bake a pie to take over to Bob. Or, pick up a bottle of Jack Daniels, which might be easier.

When you ring the doorbell, you are surprised to see a rather sickly looking Bob answer the door. He is feeling rather low and covered in all sorts of strange bumps.

?Geez Bob, you don't look so good. What's the matter??

?I've got a scorching case of smallpox!?

?That's terrible!?

?Yeah, but at least I'm not as sick as Charlie across the street. He's got polio and can't walk!?

It's unlikely that your neighborhood is going to experience an epidemic of smallpox or polio any time soon.

Smallpox was declared as globally eradicated by the World Health Organization in 1980.

Both North and South America were declared polio-free in 1994.

The only place polio is still around is in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Pakistan, Taliban militants claimed vaccination was a Western plot to sterilize local children and went so far as to murder those involved in giving vaccinations.

Sheer ignorance and a middle ages mentality saw cases of polio on the rise in that country.

The theory of vaccinations has been around for a long time and has been practised in some form in various countries for centuries.

However, modern medical technology means they have it down to a science.

A vaccine contains a microorganism or virus in a weakened or killed state, or proteins or toxins from the organism.

Your body will recognize this virus as an outsider and take measures to fight against it by developing an immunity.

Usually you visit your doctor after you have developed symptoms requiring attention.

A vaccine is a way of preventing an illness before it even starts.

Instead of the entire town coming down with a potentially contagious and deadly disease, the disease never has the opportunity to start and the threat is eliminated.

There have always been people who are skeptical of the vaccination process. However there has been a surge of anti-vaxxers over the past few years.

Anti-vaxxers claim everything from required vaccinations being a human rights violation to claiming vaccinations cause brain disorders and autism.

Scientific evidence has debunked any connection between vaccinations and autism.

As far as requiring children to be immunized against disease being a human rights violation, maybe they should consider a child's right to be immunized against potentially deadly illness their right to protection in a modern and civilized country.

The old saying 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' wasn't thought up during a Bridge tournament last week. Smart people have long realized that working to prevent a problem before it starts far outweighs the time, work, and expense, that will be required to remedy a situation after it has occurred.

The same people who refuse to vaccinate their children against disease, think nothing of having the oil changed in their car on a regular basis to prevent engine damage and problems down the line.

Why would you take the time to vaccinate your car with a few fresh quarts of 5-W-20 oil and a new filter to prevent engine damage, but refuse to use the same type of preventive measures on your child to prevent disease?

I'm pretty sure modern western doctors are well trained in vaccines, what they do, the side effects, and potential risks. And yet, doctors overwhelmingly support the use of vaccines to prevent illness.

I can't see any physician reading scientific evidence that says a particular vaccine has a 20%, or even less, chance of causing autism in infants, and still suggesting to a parent it's worth the risk.

Medical research has given us the ability to reduce the instances of, or possibly eliminate, certain types of diseases. It has a proven track record. Just ask the companies who used to produce iron lungs to keep polio patients alive-

Being cautious about your child's well being is natural as a parent, however, when the evidence points to the overwhelming benefits of vaccinations, it's better to listen to medical science rather than information gleaned from an internet website.