



# WTH is going on with breakthrough infections? Dr. Marty Makary explains why renewed panic over COVID-19 is unwarranted

Episode #113 | July 28, 2021 | Danielle Pletka, Marc Thiessen, and Dr. Marty Makary

Danielle Pletka: Hi, I'm Danielle Pletka.

Marc Thiessen: And I'm Marc Thiessen.

Danielle Pletka: Welcome to our podcast, "What the Hell Is Going On?" Marc, what the hell is going on?

Marc Thiessen: Well, we're talking about breakthrough infections. So, this is the new COVID panic, right? We've got these Texas democrats who are fleeing the state, they flew on a plane without wearing masks and they got breakthrough infections.

Marc Thiessen: And so now all of a sudden people are saying, "Oh my gosh. The delta variant. It's so infectious, it's so dangerous that even people who are vaccinated are coming down with COVID. We've got to lock down again. We've got to have mask mandates on. Maybe we shouldn't open schools up again. We've got to bring back the pandemic restrictions," and it's just a load of BS.

Danielle Pletka: So, I think that first, you are right of course that there's a ton of BS, as there has been from the get-go in discussions about this, but I do think that the White House has caught on to something. And it's something that is at once medical but also highly political, and that is the notion that there are two Americas. You said it. Others have said it, but the White House also likes to say it, right? There's vaccinated America and there's unvaccinated America.

Danielle Pletka: Now what you're talking about in terms of kids is unvaccinated America, but what the White House is really trying to promote is the notion that everybody's going to have to go back in to all the horrible lockdown and it's all because of a bunch of rubes who won't get themselves vaccinated and of course, we know who they are. Right? They're people who voted for Donald Trump. So, I think this is going to be very interesting. Yes from a medical standpoint, but as you rightly say, mostly not in terms of illness, not in terms of people who are coming down with this new variant, but in terms of what is being pushed on people because of it.

Marc Thiessen: I want to talk about the political side of it in a second, but I did some digging on

the effectiveness of these vaccines and if you look, I've dug into the CDC data. As of July 12, 2021 there've been a grand total of 5,492 Americans hospitalized with breakthrough infections. That's out of 159 million people who've been vaccinated in this country, and of those 5,492, 791 have died of COVID-19. So you've got a death rate of 0.005%. Put that in perspective. I looked this up. **Your chance of dying in a lightning strike is 0.007%. If you're vaccinated, you have a better chance of dying from a hornet or wasp sting, a dog attack, a car crash, drowning, sunstroke, choking on food than you do of dying from COVID-19.**

Marc Thiessen: And by the way of those hospitalizations, almost all of those people are older people, elderly, or have immunocompromised or have underlying conditions. There was an Israeli study of patients hospitalized with breakthrough infections. They found only 4% had no comorbidities. So, the people who are getting sick today and having back outcomes, if you're vaccinated from COVID-19, are people who are immunocompromised, who are sick, who are older, who have underlying conditions. If you are vaccinated and you're basically a healthy individual, you are basically bulletproof. You are not going to die. You are not going to get hospitalized. For you, the pandemic is over. It's over. There is a pandemic of the unvaccinated that's happening in this country, and some people are not getting the vaccine because they have natural immunity, because they've already had COVID. Other people are choosing not to do it, and that's their choice, but their choice is also to put themselves at greater risk of COVID. And so, **why should kids in America have to wear masks in school or not go to school because some people chose not to get vaccinated and put themselves at risk?**

Danielle Pletka: So, this is a genuine question. You've looked into all these numbers. I've looked into a lot of the data about whose been vaccinated and who hasn't been vaccinated. There's a good Kaiser Family Foundation study out about that, if anybody is really interested in digging into them, but what do you think? Why is there this weird urge to reinstate the restrictions that existed at the peak of the COVID pandemic, when there was no vaccine? For the Biden Administration, that says failure. For the economy, that says failure. What do you think it's all about?

Marc Thiessen: I think a couple things are going on. Number one, I think a lot of people got in touch with their inner Stalin during the pandemic, right? A lot of these local officials and particularly-

Danielle Pletka: Who knew there were so many people who had an inner Stalin?

Marc Thiessen: There's lots of them. People like telling other people what to do. There's a subset of the population that just likes telling people what to do, and they loved-

Danielle Pletka: It's staggering. I was shopping the other day and I walked into the store and the woman said, "Put on hand sanitizer." And I said, "No. I'm allergic to hand sanitizer," which I actually am, and she said, "Well then you can't come in." And I was like, "But there's no one else in the store and that's not actually a rule."

Marc Thiessen: And also, you can't get COVID from surface transmission.

medical leadership has been ignoring natural immunity from prior infection. So that's just a little preface to how I'm describing this. If you're not immune in America, it's about 5% of seniors, and it's roughly 30% of adults in America, you should be worried. You should be worried.

Dr. Marty Makary: If you're in that group and you're high risk, you're more advanced in age, you're not a 30 year old healthy person, you should be worried because right now delta is ripping through the United States in ways nobody saw because of its contagiousness. And so, we thought we were in a really good place with COVID, and then what happened is something no one expected to happen, a massive, massive epidemic in India, and out of that emerged an entirely new variant. And so that's what we're dealing with right now.

Marc Thiessen: Just to put this in perspective for people. I was just looking at the CDC data, and so as of July 12th, there were a grand total of 5,492 Americans who've been hospitalized with breakthrough infections out of 159 million people who have been vaccinated. I know we're not factoring natural immunity in. 791 people dead. That is a death rate of 0.0005%. I mean, is it fair to say that if you are vaccinated or if you have natural immunity, the pandemic is over for you? You're not going to die.

Dr. Marty Makary: That's true.

Marc Thiessen: You're not going to get hospitalized.

Dr. Marty Makary: That's right. You're good to go, and you should feel good, and you should live a normal life with the one exception that if you're in an area where there's an active, big outbreak, you may want to be a little careful around those who are non-immune but otherwise you should feel good. I would also add to that Marc, any data from the CDC pretty much has major problems, and one of those issues is that when they talk about the hospitalized with COVID, so we have routine testing of everyone who walks in the doors of the hospital, absolute screening, by the way it violates CDC guidelines because the CDC says you really should not be testing those who are vaccinated who have no symptoms. They've been saying that for a long time.

Dr. Marty Makary: So, we're testing every single person that walks in. Guess what? If you're immune you're going to fend off the infection if you get it, and you might have a virus particle or two sitting in your nose, and the PCR test is so sensitive with the 30 cycle threshold, it is so sensitive it can pick up one dead virus particle. You have no risk of disease or transmission. You're going to light up as positive. So, those are people counted in your statistic. I just point that out because we're over testing those who are fully vaccinated and immune right now.

Marc Thiessen: So, that data is actually overstating the risk, 0.0005%?

Dr. Marty Makary: That's right.

Marc Thiessen: So it's even lower risk than that in reality?

Dr. Marty Makary: That's right, that's right.

Marc Thiessen: Wow.

Danielle Pletka: All right, wait. So, this is a complete counter narrative to what we're hearing. So, my favorite medical professional, Dr. Anthony Fauci and others have been suggesting over, and everybody knows why I'm so derisive of him and his love of fame, but he has suggested, the White House has begun to suggest my own State of Virginia and Marc's State of Virginia has begun to suggest that people should go back to mask wearing. Los Angeles has mandated that everybody indoors needs to wear masks again. So, what are we talking about realistically? What I'm hearing from you, Marty and what I just heard from Marc in terms of stats, is that's ridiculous. What I'm hearing from the press, from the White House and others is oh my God, light your hair on fire, COVID is back.

Dr. Marty Makary: Hopefully I rank somewhere in the top 10 by the way in your top doctors. I'll take rank number three or four after Fauci, that's fine with me. So I, as you know, was calling for the lock downs before the pandemic hit. I was scared. I was really scared, and then quickly said, "Look. We've got to have an open society and live with this thing in a safe way." And then really when the mandates were coming on for anything, vaccine mandates or mask mandates, I was saying, "Look, people should wear a mask" but the idea of mandating things, once we got down to a very low level of infection in the late spring a few months ago, I was against the mandates. Now, I've got to be honest with you. I'm starting to think that there's a lot we don't know with delta.

Dr. Marty Makary: We're in some uncharted territory, and in an area of an active outbreak, for a short period of time until we have the data, if people want to wear masks or business leaders who have a small, dense indoor setting without good ventilation, I'm not as opposed to the idea as long as we have exit criteria. I think where we're getting into real problems right now is first of all, by having on the restrictions like masks longer than we needed to and we did that in June and even in May. **We've politicized it now.** So, people are too desensitized. They're not going to do it, and if we ask people to do something without hard data, we're just going to ignite a firestorm and it's going to hurt our credibility in the future. We might need people to wear masks in five years if we see some new virus emerge. So, there is a lot with the delta that's uncharted and now I'm wondering, in an area of an active outbreak, if I were in a crowded church, would I wear a mask even though I'm vaccinated? I might.

Marc Thiessen: But here's the thing, Marty, and I want to turn to kids in a minute because you've written a great piece on this but before we do that, obviously there's some people who are immunocompromised and the vaccines don't work for them, right? And there's some people who have preexisting conditions, health conditions that make them more susceptible and they don't want to get the vaccines. Putting those people aside, people who are getting sick right now, I think it's something like 99.5% of deaths are people who didn't get vaccinated. 97% of hospitalizations are people who chose not to get vaccinated. If you're choosing not to get vaccinated now, before when there was a shortage of vaccines, this was not an issue of choice. It's now an issue of choice. **Why should people who have been responsible and gotten COVID vaccines have to have**

their lives turned around and go back into turtle mode and pandemic restrictions because of people who are making bad choices?

- Dr. Marty Makary: Yeah. Now, good point. Look, this is why right now I would say that I would strongly recommend a mask in an area of an active outbreak, but the mandate does have issues and that is the very issue. **In the United States, if you're susceptible to COVID, that is you're nonimmune, you're doing so at your own individual risk and society is not going to shut down for your sake because you chose to go down that path.** Kids are such low risk that that's a whole separate issue, so that's not a reason to keep things shut down.
- Marc Thiessen: Let's talk about the kids because you had a great piece in the Wall Street Journal the other day, and you point out that out of the 600,000 some odd Americans who died with a COVID diagnosis code in their record, only 335 of those were kids under 18, and there's no data showing whether the COVID was actually the cause of death. We're now starting to see parents are bracing for the teachers unions to start pushing for, "Oh, delta variant is so dangerous. We've got to delay school reopenings. Every kid has to wear a mask." Teachers are not going to want to go back to schools and we're going to have this whole start again in the fall. Is there any justification for keeping kids out of school and not starting schools, or even requiring kids to wear masks in school?
- Dr. Marty Makary: Well, even the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC have said, "Look. Kids can do some mitigation like distancing and other things, but they've got to be in school, even if you cannot achieve the mitigation," which is pretty remarkable. To see the CDC say that, which is what we've been saying the whole time, right? That is sure, you can take precautions and do things in schools but they've got to be there. They've got to be in the classroom, and so that was the first time we heard from it. Now as you know, when I heard at the end of the spring the teachers unions and the politicians at the CDC, which is the political appointees at the CDC say, "Oh, we expect kids to be in person in the fall," I knew this was just going to be a battle royal, and that was posturing, and you're seeing it now with the masks too.
- Dr. Marty Makary: I think one reason they're saying, "We want kids to wear masks in school, even if they're two years old," is because once the vaccine is approved they're going to use the vaccine as a condition to take off the mask, even **though kids under 12 wearing masks has zero data.** How is there no data? The NIH has \$41 billion dollars a year and 20,000 employees. How did nobody study this? **There's no data in kids.** The other thing is, do healthy kids die from COVID? No one knows. Ask Fauci. Ask the CDC director. Ask anybody. Have any healthy kids died of COVID? No one can tell you because that number, 335 deaths in kids under 18 the whole pandemic, the whole year and a half, no one has verified.
- Dr. Marty Makary: The CDC has never picked up the phone to call each of those families or the doctors who cared for those kids and get the history. Figure out, are all of those stats clustered around a comorbid condition, or set of comorbid condition? That's to me unremarkable that we put restrictions and stole the livelihoods of 50 million American kids for a year and a half without verifying the data. That, to me, is unbelievable.