

Get Vaccinated – Post from Marc Ost (Eric’s RX Shoppe)

On a Thursday morning in July, both my kids woke up around 4 AM with fever. I had take-home COVID tests, my first instinct was to give my 4-year-old daughter a test. She was half asleep and took the test; it was negative. Sigh of relief...for a few hours.

At 9 AM, everyone was awake. Fever is most common symptom in children, so I decided to retest us to be cautious. I was negative. My wife took a test, and I will never forget the first time I saw the slightest positive line forming. My daughter and wife retested; both positive. My son, daughter, and wife all got PCR tests after speaking with their doctors. As expected, all 3 were positive. This is a father/husband’s worst nightmare; your wife and kids getting a virus that you have spent so much time and effort to protect everyone from. I felt helpless.

Friday morning, before everyone woke up, I took another test because of a slight sore throat.... Positive. Now let us backtrack, my wife and I are both fully vaccinated. How could she and I be positive??? My wife is among those who are immunocompromised. We took every precaution and recommendation provided by the CDC. We still wear masks since our children are too young to get vaccinated. My wife and I are what is known as breakthrough cases. Something we are all starting see becoming a common occurrence. This is a plea for everyone who is not yet vaccinated to please do so. The vaccine will help slow down the spread and help protect you from more serious COVID complications if you test positive after being fully vaccinated. Given the access to at-home tests, we acted quickly to minimize any spread and started our 10-day quarantine at home. We did our own contact tracing and no one around us was exposed.

Since the pandemic began, Eric and I went out of our way to keep our customers and employees safe, as well as ourselves and families. We made decisions not based on what was financially beneficial, but instead what provided the safest work environment. Our employees went above and beyond; they have been AWESOME since the start. When we became one of the first pharmacies to provide the vaccine in the State, we entered 6 months of craziness. Never did we imagine we would do over 25k shots, add 6 employees, and have over 50+ volunteers. We made so many sacrifices by going non-stop for 6 months; Eric and I are forever grateful to our wives and families for their sacrifices they made and being understanding so we can make a difference. For 6 months, Eric worked 7 days a week, some nights till 10 PM to make sure we did not waste a precious vaccine dose. I spent many nights falling asleep at my computer in the office trying to make sure everything was set up and done so we can continue to get vaccines. We had no playbook. We had no one to help or guide us. We created the systems on our own and played a pivotal part to make it easier for other providers to book appointments, administer vaccines, and bill for the service. Through this, we made many critical relationships that will continue long beyond the pandemic. We prided ourselves in providing these vaccines in a safe and efficient manner. Sure, we had hiccups, but overall, I am so proud of what we (our store, our employees, our volunteers) were able to accomplish.

The title of this post is “Get Vaccinated”. We live in the greatest country in the world; we all have so many freedoms and liberties most others are deprived off. This is not a political fight or a mandate. This is a plead. If you do not want to get vaccinated, I will disagree with your choice but will respect it. I personally do not think the Government should “mandate” the vaccine, but I do believe any public or private institution (school, business, public gathering) should have the right to require someone to be vaccinated. In my opinion, not being vaccinated poses a threat to anyone you are around while not wearing a mask. If you choose not to get vaccinated, I think you should continue to wear a mask, socially distance from others, and not be around anyone outside your household who is under 12 without

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wearing your mask. I do not want another person to test positive or die unnecessarily (potentially due to exposure to someone who is unvaccinated).

If you are still reading, thank you; and hopefully that means you will at least read the reasons I think you should get vaccinated. Do not trust me, do your own research, make a decision on your own and hopefully it’s the right one.

1 – It is safe. We gave over 25k shots. No one has magnetic arm or extra limb that grew. Sure, you may have short time side effects, but these subside within 24-48 hours usually and the protection you get greatly outweighs the short time discomfort. While side effects can potentially accompany any prescription drug or vaccine, the number of shots administered in the US and around the world show the vaccine is safe.

2 – Protect others. We had so many people who did not want to get vaccinated but did so because they wanted to see someone who was at risk. THANK YOU! It is one of the most selfless things you can do. You severely decrease your risk of spreading COVID-19 by getting vaccinated. If not for yourself, then do it for someone you love or care about.

3 – Protect yourself. You probably read this and say why would someone who electively chose to get two doses of a vaccine and then test positive for COVID six months later say this? The answer is because the vaccine did its job. The vaccine does not guarantee you will not get COVID, it prevents you from hospitalization or death. I was happy to be vaccinated and will happily get another booster. Might I have been fine without the vaccine, maybe. But I know in my head I was comfortable that I had less of a chance of hospitalization or death because I was fully vaccinated. I read so many stories, blogs, and posts of someone who is to be intubated or dying asking to get vaccinated when it’s already too late. In college, each day during basketball practice there would be an inspirational quote that would be discussed. “Don’t say hello when it’s time to say goodbye” always stuck with me and couldn’t be more perfect when talking about the choice to get vaccinated or not.

4 – Help us end this Pandemic! Today, if we continue without a single additional person getting vaccinated, we will never exit this pandemic. Enough people must get vaccinated for the vaccines to work at full effectiveness and the virus to go away. The virus is smart and if there are enough people who are helping the virus mutate and transmit (unvaccinated), it will continue to mutate into more contagious and more deadly strains. We do know one concrete fact; the vaccines are effective at reducing the spread when testing positive (it can still happen...just much less of a chance).

5- What’s More Important? Whatever else you have going on in your life can wait. If you ever want “normal” to come back, that will require enough of you to get vaccinated sooner rather than later. My personal feeling is that if we don’t make much progress with the unvaccinated over the next 2-3 months, we will be in for a long Fall and Winter with many positive cases and many deaths. Time is of the essence. You hear about all the athletes and how some are waiting till the off-season or the right time to get vaccinated. You are hurting your team more by not getting vaccinated now. We are all on one team, help the team and don’t hurt the team.

Thank you for reading this. It’s not meant as an argumentative post, just one to express my opinion in a public forum. If one person reads this and decides to get vaccinated, then I’m glad I did this. Whether you come to Eric’s RX Shoppe or any other provider, it doesn’t matter, as long as you do your part and get vaccinated!