

Trump and Kennedy launch unhinged anti-science tirade in autism press conference

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President Donald Trump conducted a White House press conference on Monday that stands as the most sweeping assault on science and public health by any sitting president, perhaps only matched by Trump's infamous April 2020 coronavirus briefing, when he encouraged Americans to inject disinfectant and use ultraviolet light inside their bodies. This latest spectacle represents a dangerous escalation in the Trump administration's broader war against science, medicine and healthcare policy.

The parallels to Trump's 2020 disinfectant debacle are unmistakable. As the *World Socialist Web Site* observed in an April 2020 perspective, "Rasputin in the White House," that press conference revealed "the elevation of an especially despicable and even depraved personality to a high position in the state," a characteristic of "doomed political systems" throughout history. Just as Trump's bleach recommendations exposed the oligarchy's complete indifference to human life in the service of reopening the economy at the height of the pandemic, Monday's autism announcement reveals the administration's willingness to terrorize pregnant women and families with autistic children to advance its broader anti-science agenda.

Throughout the hour-long briefing, Trump demonstrated disturbing signs of neurological decline, repeating variations of the phrases "don't take Tylenol," "don't give Tylenol to your child after it's born," and "separate the vaccines" literally dozens of times in an unhinged, repetitive pattern that suggested possible dementia or other neurological degeneration. His rambling, often incoherent statements included this verbatim declaration:

Let's do it now. Nothing bad can happen, it can only good happen. But with Tylenol, don't take it. Don't take it! And if you can't live, if your fever is so bad, you have to take one, because there's no alternative to that, sadly. First question: what can you take instead? It's actually, there's not an alternative to that. And as you know, other of the medicines are absolutely proven bad. I mean they've been proven bad, with the Aspirins and the Advils and others, right? And they've been

proven bad.

At the center of Monday's press conference were several demonstrably false and dangerous claims that contradict decades of established medical science.

Trump declared that "taking Tylenol is not good" and announced that the FDA would notify physicians that "the use of acetaminophen during pregnancy can be associated with a very increased risk of autism." This assertion flies in the face of extensive research, including a major 2024 Swedish study of nearly 2.5 million children that found no connection between prenatal acetaminophen use and neurodevelopmental disorders.

Regarding pregnant women with fevers, Trump repeatedly insisted, "There's no downside, you just have to tough it out." In doing so, Trump deliberately minimized the well-documented risks of maternal hyperthermia, which has been linked to neural tube defects, congenital heart defects and other serious birth defects when fever occurs during critical developmental periods.

The medical community has responded with immediate alarm to Trump's unsubstantiated claims. Arthur Caplan, the founding head of the division of medical ethics at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, told *New York Times* reporter Christina Jewett:

The announcement on autism was the saddest display of a lack of evidence, rumors, recycling old myths, lousy advice, outright lies and dangerous advice I have ever witnessed by anyone in authority in the world claiming to know anything about science.

Trump launched into a characteristic rant about childhood vaccinations, claiming children "get these massive vaccines like you'd give to a horse" and asserting they contain "sometimes 80 different vaccines in them." This grotesque exaggeration (the CDC actually recommends 12 vaccines from birth through age six) reveals the administration's fundamental hostility to proven public health measures.

Trump's repeated claims that "there's no downside" to spacing vaccines over five years ignores compelling evidence that delayed vaccination schedules leave children vulnerable to preventable diseases for extended periods and significantly increase the risk of remaining undervaccinated.

Trump suggested delaying the hepatitis B vaccine until age 12, ignorantly stating, "I would wait until the baby is 12 years old" to "give them Hepatitis B," forgetting to even say "vaccine." This recommendation would reverse over three decades of successful public health policy that has virtually eliminated hepatitis B among American children, reducing cases by 99 percent from 1990 to 2022.

Trump, Health Secretary Kennedy, and FDA head Marty Makary all promoted the long-debunked claim that the Amish community has no autism because they do not vaccinate. When asked whether improved diagnostics might explain rising autism rates, Kennedy dismissed this scientific consensus as "one of the canards that has been promoted by the industry for many years." There is overwhelming evidence from researchers that expanded diagnostic criteria, increased awareness and better screening methods account for most of the observed increase in autism diagnoses in recent decades.

In one of his most bizarre moments, Trump claimed, "We've learned some pretty good things about certain elements of the genius that can be given to a baby, and the baby can get better, and in some cases, maybe substantially better."

Under the guise of a medical breakthrough, the White House rolled out this "genius" cure for autism, leucovorin, with the trappings of a patent-medicine show, flanked by some of the most notorious hucksters and snake-oil salesmen in American public life. Dr. Mehmet Oz, whose television empire and supplement ventures made millions by pitching unproven remedies and gimmick diagnostics, embodied the crass commercialism underlying the event.

It is entirely plausible, indeed likely, that officials sharing that podium could directly profit from the hype and regulatory maneuvers surrounding this product line, given their histories of monetizing "wellness" claims, book and media brands, and litigation profiteering.

In reality, leucovorin is a decades-old cancer drug, typically used to protect patients from methotrexate toxicity during chemotherapy, that has now been cynically repackaged as an autism cure with virtually no supporting evidence.

As noted by epidemiologist Dr. Ellie Murray in her Substack, the entire research foundation for this supposed breakthrough consists of nine small trials registered in the federal database, almost all conducted by the same group of researchers at the University of Arkansas. Of these nine studies, most remain incomplete or failed entirely, with one terminated because researchers could not enroll a single patient.

The sole completed trial with published results tested just 12 children over a mere two weeks and found no meaningful improvement in any measure of autism symptoms, behavior, or

quality of life. The study was so poorly executed that it recruited only 12 of a planned 40 participants, yet this scientific failure now serves as the foundation for a presidential proclamation of an autism cure.

This mirrors previous episodes of autism quackery, such as David Geier's administration of Lupron, a chemical castration drug, to autistic children based on equally fraudulent theories about mercury and testosterone. Leucovorin has become the hydroxychloroquine for autism: a desperate president's miracle cure unsupported by evidence, promoted by the same cast of hucksters who profit from fear and desperation.

Monday's announcement must be understood within the broader context of Kennedy's systematic dismantling of vaccine policy through his control of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). After Kennedy removed all 17 sitting ACIP members and replaced them with vaccine skeptics and conspiracy theorists, last week the panel voted to restrict the MMRV vaccine for children under 4, cast doubt on the importance of COVID vaccines for younger people, and has been working to delay hepatitis B shots given at birth.

Significantly, Trump declared "They'll say it later, but I'm going to say it now" in reference to official recommendations from HHS agencies and the ACIP. In effect, Trump was stating that Kennedy's committee had not yet provided him with the pseudo-scientific justification for his most extreme positions, but he nevertheless would issue these dangerous pronouncements.

These attacks on science and public health cannot be divorced from the broader fascistic trajectory of the Trump administration. The oligarchy's embrace of anti-science positions reflects its understanding that genuine public health measures conflict with its class interests. The elimination of vaccine protections, the terrorizing of pregnant women with false medical claims, and the promotion of dangerous quackery all serve the oligarchy's broader agenda of increasing mortality rates and reducing healthcare costs.

Monday's press conference represents not merely a return to Trump's prior medical quackery, but a deepening of what can only be characterized as a policy of deliberate social murder that has developed throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The working class must understand that the most basic defense of science and public health requires nothing less than the overthrow of the capitalist system that has elevated such figures to power. Only through the independent mobilization of the working class on a socialist program can humanity defend itself against the barbarism that Trump and his oligarchic backers represent.



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