

**Ishmael Reed:**

What about this new virus? What's going on with that?

**Michael LeNoir:**

Which one are you talking about?

**Tennessee Reed:**

The new Covid variant.

**Michael LeNoir:**

It's just another variant. You expect that as often as these viruses are exposed to people and they multiply, the more times they bear, the more variants you'll have. And this variant is already pretty unusual because it is a complete rearrangement in the geography of the virus. But it isn't clinically more dangerous than the Covid virus. But you have to remember that a lot of people died from Covid. Indeed, they're not as present as early on in the pandemic. However, you could still die from Covid if you're immunocompromised or if you're old, so even though this is a variant and doesn't seem to be clinically a problem, it might be much more of a problem for those who are old and for those who are immunocompromised.

**Ishmael Reed:**

Is it, is the death rate going up? Is it climbing?

**Michael LeNoir:**

Yeah, no question. The number of hospitalizations and deaths is climbing, but not as much as you would think. And in fact, I said in one of my newsletters:

COVID 19 is back

I hope it won't last

Admissions are up

Not as bad as the past

A vaccine is here

But all that I ask

If you don't get the shot

At least use the mask

The CDC recommended that everyone, from six months old get the new FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccine. This new COVID-19 vaccine was designed to protect against the COVID-19 variants currently making people sick. The CDC is recommending the vaccine for everyone aged 6 months and older.

The vaccine doesn't necessarily prevent you from getting a COVID-19 infection but helps protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. It also reduces the chance of getting long COVID. This step brings us closer to making COVID-19 vaccines similar to the annual flu shot, targeting the main variants or strains.

I know some of you missed out on the last round, but let's be honest - COVID-19 infections are no laughing matter. Whether you choose the shot or not, wearing a mask at big gatherings of friends or even strangers makes sense.

Stay Healthy,

Dr. Mike

So that's what's going on.

**Ishmael Reed** (to Tennessee Reed):

Where'd you go?

**Tennessee Reed:**

I went to Walgreens and got my COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine together.

**Michael LeNoir:**

I got all three of them. COVID, Flu, and RSV.

**Ishmael Reed:**

What is the third one?

**Michael LeNoir:**

RSV. It's not recommended for Tennessee, but it is for you and me. It causes 15,000 death cases every year.

**Ishmael Reed:**

Oh, my goodness. So, is there compliance? I see people not wearing masks at events anymore.

**Michael LeNoir:**

Well, no. People are over everything. And that's why I said if you're not going to get the shot, you should wear the mask. That's the most effective way to reduce your COVID exposure. If you haven't gotten the shots, you will get the illness. The illness may not be so bad, but those people who get to the point of vulnerability can get pneumonia and die.

**Ishmael Reed:**

Okay. Thank you.