

Sorry, Conspiracy Theorists, There Is No 'Pneumonia Vaccine'



By Alex Berezow, PhD — April 18, 2017



Gramps gets a jab. (Credit: Shutterstock) [1]

It's impossible to keep up with every "alternative fact" or crazy conspiracy theory on the Internet. By the time a lie has circled the globe, the Truth has just put its shoes on¹. For some reason, people find falsehoods much more entertaining and believable than the truth.

I thought that I had heard every possible vaccine conspiracy theory out there: Vaccines cause autism. Vaccines aren't necessary and are pushed on us by greedy pharmaceutical companies. Vaccines are used for mind control. Bill Gates is using vaccines to control the human population.

So, even I was slightly surprised to discover yet another vaccine conspiracy theory. A couple days ago on Facebook, I came across the following comment:

"The key to surviving the flu is to get a pneumonia shot. Its [sic] not the flu that kills, it's the resultant pneumonia..."

That was followed up by a confederacy of dunces who wondered why influenza vaccines are widely promoted, while relatively little is said about the pneumonia vaccine. The conspiracy theorists concluded that pharmaceutical companies can make higher profits from an annual flu shot than from the longer-lasting pneumonia vaccine.

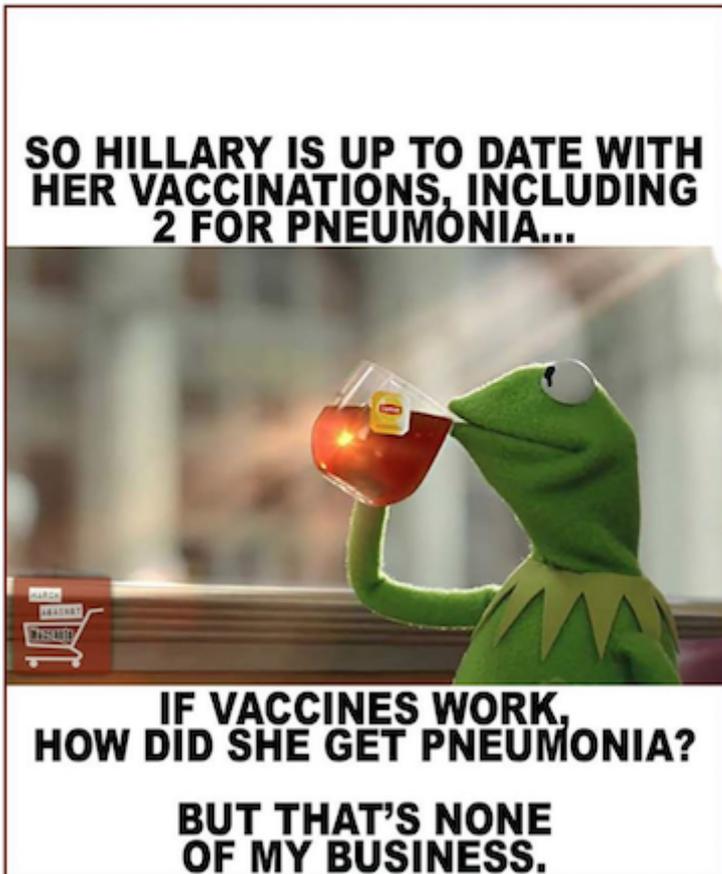
Quod erat demonstrandum, right? Not so fast.

There Is No 'Pneumonia Vaccine'



March Against Monsanto added a new photo.

4 hrs · 🌐



Like a headache, pneumonia is a

symptom or condition. Specifically, it is lung inflammation, and it can be lethal. In the absence of further information, simply having pneumonia provides no clue as to the underlying cause. Indeed, pneumonia can be the result of infection with bacteria, viruses, or fungi. So, there is no such thing as a "pneumonia vaccine."

There are, however, [two different types of pneumococcal vaccines](#) [2], which are colloquially called pneumonia vaccines². The pneumococcal vaccines target *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, a bacterium that causes pneumonia. This [bacterium is a particular worry](#) [3] for babies and toddlers, people aged 65 and older, and individuals of any age who smoke or have chronic health problems.

Therefore, a person who receives the pneumococcal vaccine is protected from pneumonia caused specifically by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, but not by other microbes, such as influenza -- no matter what [March Against Monsanto](#) [4] or Kermit the Frog says.

Why Don't Pharmaceutical Companies Cure Diseases?

The strangest part of all these biomedical conspiracy theories is the widespread belief that pharmaceutical companies don't want to cure diseases because they make more money by forcing people into lifelong treatments³. But, they do make cures; they're called vaccines. Yet, the conspiracy theorists don't want them.

Notes

- (1) On the bright side, this means that I'll be employed for a very long time.
 - (2) Stop calling them that.
 - (3) A particularly dumb conspiracy theory is that the [FDA and Big Pharma are suppressing a cure for cancer](#) [5].
-

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/04/18/sorry-conspiracy-theorists-there-no-pneumonia-vaccine-11158>

Links

- [1] <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/vaccinating-elderly-person-232379923>
- [2] <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/pneumo/>
- [3] <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/pneumococcal-disease-streptococcus-pneumoniae>
- [4] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/09/19/march-against-monsanto-now-anti-vaccine-conspiracy-movement-10186>
- [5] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/06/11/proof-that-there-is-no-fda-big-pharma-conspiracy-to-suppress-cancer-cures>