

2/9/2022

My name is Melissa Hart. I live in Old Wethersfield with my husband and four children ages 24, 22, 19 (he has Down syndrome) and 15. Let me tell you about our family's experience with Covid and the mess that the mandates have created in the lives of my children.

I became extremely ill in February of 2020. At the time I was a special ed para in a pre-k classroom. I went to my physician twice over a two-week period, was told I had an upper respiratory infection. I had every symptom of covid including loss of taste and smell. My oxygen levels hovered at 88 for 2 weeks. I missed a week of work. There was no masking. Nobody else got sick. I self-medicated with my asthma meds. About a month later, my 15-year-old had a cough. He lost his sense of smell and missed two days of school. Then we went into lockdown. Nobody else in my family got sick. There was no masking in our home.

Fast forward to returning to school in the fall of 2020. My two boys attended Wethersfield High School in person. My 15-year-old was the only student in some of his classes. He was masked for 7 hours a day. He kept getting large, painful boils at the tip of his nose from his mask. We saw the doctor numerous times. He needed antibiotics twice over the course of a few months to treat the infection from wearing the mask. He also wears glasses and tries to alternate between glasses and contacts. He is unable to wear his glasses at all now during the school day. My son with special needs would come home complaining of headaches every single day. Even though he has a medical exemption, he is required to mask up. People with Down syndrome have larger tongues which causes them to breathe through their mouths. As you can imagine, that leads to a soggy mask. For 7 hours. Every day. He would get a yeast infection at the corners of his mouth.

This year in school, masking again. My 15-year-old had a cold in October. Covid negative. It resulted in a throat infection which lasted for over **3 months**. The ENT agreed that masks contributed to the infection and hindered healing. We tried 3 different antibiotics and finally got it to clear up. It was painful and he couldn't swallow. He missed several days of school and his first semester grades suffered (as you know, remote learning not an option). He had to wear the mask while in pain for three months. The tonsil stones that he had caused him to want to cough often, and the poor boy would hold in his coughs for hours at a time because he didn't want to be sent to the nurse or home for coughing. I am thankful that our nurse was compassionate. I even sent her pictures of his throat which she could not believe. He is also required to wear a mask to play hockey while he is covered head to toe in gear. The mask gets wet within minutes, and it has been proven that wet masks are ineffective. Which brings me back to my son with Down syndrome and his wet masks...he is still getting headaches. His speech has regressed as have his social skills.

Multiple studies have been done and I'm sure you have all been sent the links. I will attach one to over 150 studies. Cloth masks are ineffective against the covid virus. The vaccination is not stopping people from getting Covid or spreading it (all 6 of us are boosted). My 22-year-old tested positive in August, 2 months after her second dose and she barely left the house and when she did, she was masked. My 24-year-old tested positive on New Year's Day, 5 months after his second dose and he masked everywhere. When they were sick, the rest of us in my home did not get sick and we were not masked around each other. I am not anti-mask or anti vax, but I am very pro-choice. A KF 94 or KN95 mask will protect its wearer. If an individual wants to attempt to protect themselves from Covid, let them wear a "real" mask. In an article in the Washington Post, Drs. Shira Doron, Westyn Branch-Elliman and Elissa Perkins wrote, "Respirators and other high-quality masks are highly effective at protecting their wearers, regardless of what people around them are doing. That makes the old mantra 'my mask protects you and your mask protects me' obsolete."

My 22-year-old daughter was recently diagnosed with severe anxiety and panic disorder. She had an ambulance ride to Hartford Hospital, is now seeing a therapist and taking some hard-hitting medications. She is afraid of the world that we have created. Always afraid that something will be taken from her, that the world will shut down again. We were just able to have her move back to her dormitory in Massachusetts this past weekend. There she is tested every 2 weeks which is another major stressor. Can you imagine if you found out you were positive and then were whisked out of your home and moved into a quarantine room in a different location only being able to bring the items you could carry? I think any normal person would be a bit anxious.

We as parents know our children best. It is well beyond the time to let parents make decisions with and for them. Not the government. Over the last 2 years we have learned a lot about this virus. We have also learned a lot about our elected officials (the majority of whom I will never vote for again). Our children were made pawns for money. It is disgusting and unacceptable. If you must keep telling yourself that it is o.k., the children are resilient, then you already know that you are doing something that harms them. These kids are not going to just bounce back. They are losing out on valuable time. Not to mention the development of a normal immune system. For reference, please find and read the article "Covid and the Hygiene Hypothesis". When the masks come off, the younger children are really going to struggle. And the longer they are masked, the worse it will be. Unless of course your plan is to mask forever.

I am begging you all to start treating our children like human beings. Give parents the choice. Our children have sacrificed the most. We cannot give back what has been taken from them, but we can move forward and attempt to fix what has been broken before it is too late. Two years is too long.

Thank you,

Melissa Hart

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<https://brownstone.org/articles/more-than-150-comparative-studies-and-articles-on-mask-ineffectiveness-and-harms/>