



Why EVERYONE is sick: How Australia is now in the midst of a 'multi-demic' – and nothing will stop MILLIONS from copping a worse illness than Covid

Description

AUSTRALIA: Australia is being attacked by a devastating 'multi-demic' assault from a vicious cocktail of viruses, according to a top medical expert who says the threat has been caused by lockdowns reducing our natural immunity.

The population's defences against the range of different viruses and illnesses that proliferate in winter has been reduced by the very isolation measures which were meant to help in stopping the spread of Covid.

Now the rapid spread of bugs is being fuelled by cold, damp winter conditions, combined with staff returning to offices and commuting on packed trains and buses.

And that's on top of the new, more infectious Omicron variant BA.5 which is sweeping through the population.



Australia is facing a devastating multi-demic assault from a vicious cocktail of viruses attacking the nation, a top medical expert has warned

‘We’re facing a multi-demic of respiratory viruses,’ Sydney University infectious disease expert Professor Robert Booy told the Courier-Mail.

‘There’s three or four of them causing trouble – influenza, RSV, para-influenza, adenovirus, HMPV... there are a lot.

‘Because were locked down for two years, the level of natural immunity dropped off against flu and Covid, so we have a lot of cases and deaths due to Omicron and the opening of a society with less natural immunity.

‘If you want to spread an infection, you open up society.’

NSW alone is facing a massive outbreak of RSV which can kill infants, with numbers skyrocketing from 355 to 3775 cases a week in under a month.

Businesses across the east coast have also been decimated by staff falling ill as the range of viruses spread like wildfire.

Bosses have reported a spike in absenteeism – and work-from-home – among staff.



Cold, damp winter conditions while staff return to offices and commute on packed trains and buses is fuelling the rapid spread of the killer bugs

Epidemiologist Professor Catherine Bennett told Daily Mail Australia flu jabs and Covid boosters are essential to stopping the spread, along with the return of widespread mask-wearing.

'In the eastern states of Australia we knew we would have a challenge with the flu,' the Deakin University professor said.

'Not only have people not had it the last two years, it also hasn't been front of mind for vaccination.

'We haven't had that exposure or immunisation in the last two years so people's immune systems are much much weaker.

'We have seen that play out and that is why the flu vaccine is so much more important this year and that's why it has been made freely available.

'I continue to tell anyone who hasn't got it that it is still worth getting.'



Australia recently hit the grim milestone of 10,000 Covid-19 related deaths, with more than 7,000 fatalities occurring in the last six months

Australia recently hit the grim milestone of more than 10,000 dying with Covid, with more than 7,000 of those fatalities in the past six months.

Prof Bennett said good hygiene and face masks are vital to avoid getting sick while returning to normal life.

‘While the exposure risk is so high as Covid and flu continue to spread, you get more bang for your buck practising good hygiene and wearing a face mask,’ she said.

‘Masks are so worth it. While it isn’t going to absolutely stop you from getting it, by wearing a mask you are protecting yourself, others and are subconsciously more aware of keeping your distance from others.’

Prof Bennett also said it is important people on public transport abide by the rules and wear masks – as well as keeping work areas well-ventilated.



Professor Catherine Bennett says face masks are essential to keep yourself and the community safe as multiple viruses sweep the country

‘We should have masks in place and we have those rules on public transport and some are still not abiding by it,’ Dr Bennett said.

‘We need to think about those who have underlying conditions, whether they are having chemo or are immunocompromised and rely on public transport to get around.

‘We have an obligation to think about the rest of the general public and know we are at risk of passing it on to those most vulnerable.

‘And if you are indoors make sure you are putting a fan on, opening a window and just ventilating inside spaces,’ she said.



On Tuesday, Dr Kerry Chant urged NSW residents to wear masks when they can't socially distance even if it's not mandatory

NSW chief health officer Dr Kerry Chant has urged masks to be worn even if it's not mandatory whenever people can't socially distance.

She said on Tuesday that it was only 'considerate' for people to wear a mask when they enter a shop or a crowded indoor public space.

Her comments came as health officials brace for a winter wave of Covid-19 with two more-infectious sub-strains of the Omicron variant on the loose.

'I'm concerned about this picture,' she warned. 'The virus has changed.'

'So now with Omicron, the evidence is clear that we need three or in some cases four doses to provide the best protection against getting very sick.'

'We need to act now to slow the spread of the virus in the community. We have to create an enabled environment to say that wearing a mask is an okay thing to do.'

Other experts have questioned the efficacy of more vaccinations that were designed to combat the early strains of the coronavirus, not the ones that are predominant now.

University of South Australia Professor of Epidemiology Adrian Esterman said further doses of the 'old' vaccines are of limited value in protecting against infection by the current strains.

'Although current vaccines based on the Wuhan strain will still provide some protection against serious illness and death against BA.4/5, they are unlikely to provide much, if any, protection against infection or symptomatic disease,' he said.

By BEN TALINTYRE

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