

# A society of nervous wrecks <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

The federal Conservative government's preference for home-based child care is nauseatingly familiar, but must it also scare hapless moms and dads witless with research about the perils of choosing the alternative.

A Canadian Press report last week claimed the Tories, "want to know if dust could be exposing children to harmful chemicals as they crawl around daycare centres. Health Canada is seeking scientists to collect and analyze dust at hundreds of daycares to scan for potentially dangerous substances. A call for proposals on a government tenders website says kids could be exposed to many chemicals that settle on indoor dust."

Sure, and if I take a stroll in the woods, there's a chance a tree may fall on my head. But since this actually happened to one of my forbears, the odds of a repeat occurrence in my bloodline are pretty long.

I'm far more likely to choke on \$300,000 federal studies about the dangers of dust bunnies to Canadian toddlers.

When, exactly, did we become a society of nervous wrecks, fretting about every possible threat -- imagined or real -- to our personal well being?

Is this another manifestation of our arched sense of entitlement in the breaking years of the 21st Century?

Not only do we have a right to good schools and excellent health care. Now, we demand that our periodic panic disorders be properly monetized with tax dollars.

What's next?

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In fact, the real problem with health scares is that so many of them turn out to be much ado about little, if not always nothing.

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My favourite is the recent debunking of research linking vaccines for common childhood ailments to autism. According to a report in *thestar.com*, "In 1998, a paper by Dr. Andrew Wakefield and colleagues, published in *The Lancet*, claimed to have found a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. Eventually, *The Lancet* and several of the study's authors withdrew their support of Wakefield's article due to its questionable assumptions and weak findings . . . There are no scientific data to support the theory that vaccines cause autism."

I don't know where daycare dust bunnies will rank on the list of

over-hyped health scares. But I'm reasonably certain the best and most cost-effective way of preventing juvenile illness is to teach the little rug-rats not to lick the damn floor.

-reprinted from the Times & Transcript

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** health <sup>[3]</sup>

federal programs <sup>[4]</sup>

infant/toddler <sup>[5]</sup>

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