

## 02 Feb 2021 10:10 AM AEST - RACGP urges patients to heed expert health advice

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is urging Australians to follow the advice of expert health professionals regarding the COVID-19 virus and vaccine roll-out.

It comes following reports that Federal MP Craig Kelly has appeared on a 90-minute podcast with disgraced celebrity chef Pete Evans.

Pete Evans was banned from social media site Facebook late last year for “repeated violations” of the site’s policies concerning COVID-19 virus “misinformation”. He was also fined \$25,000 by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for marketing a \$15,000 “light frequency machine” featuring recipes that could supposedly treat “the Wuhan coronavirus”.

In October 2020, the former *My Kitchen Rules* star [was heavily criticised](#) for claiming that the late Dr Harry Nespolon did not know how to best treat his pancreatic cancer. Then acting President Associate Professor Ayman Shenouda called on Mr Evans to apologise to the former RACGP President’s family.

Over the last 12 months, Mr Kelly has come under fire for championing the use of hydroxychloroquine to treat or prevent COVID-19 as well as the use of ivermectin and Betadine to fight the virus. He has also been widely criticised for declaring that compulsory mask wearing in schools would be a “form of child abuse”.

RACGP President Dr Karen Price said the latest news concerning Pete Evans and Craig Kelly was particularly disappointing.

“It is unacceptable that Craig Kelly is persisting in disseminating misinformation concerning COVID-19 and to appear on this podcast with a disgraced former celebrity chef is very unhelpful,” she said.

“We are still in the middle of a pandemic that is leaving many people feeling understandably anxious and exhausted. Those Pete Evans are preying on that anxiety to peddle false information and he should not be enabled by anyone, especially a federal Member of Parliament.

“I understand Mr Kelly’s argument that he is happy and willing to advance his point of view with any interviewer. However, he must appreciate that Pete Evans is using these platforms to spread alarming misinformation, including content linked to the Qanon conspiracy theory and COVID-19 denialist claims.

“As the President of an organisation representing thousands of GPs across Australia I urge all public figures, particularly elected politicians, to act responsibly.”

Dr Price encouraged patients to listen to the experts on COVID-19 and all other health issues.

“My advice to all Australians is straightforward but more vital than ever – when it comes to the COVID-19 virus and the vaccine please heed expert health advice, including from your GP,” she said.

“Avoid pseudo-scientific ‘cures’ and baseless conspiracy theories on social media platforms and elsewhere. I appreciate that this is an anxious time and not all people are convinced they will receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

“But please take the opportunity to talk to your doctor, we have your best interests at heart and can answer any questions you have – including on the vaccine.”

Last year, the RACGP launched a nation-wide campaign [Expert Advice Matters](#) which urged all patients to take care of their health and heed expert media advice. The RACGP is providing information and resources on the COVID-19 vaccine to support GPs and patients. The information is available on the [RACGP website](#).