

BUILDING IMMUNITY AND THE 'SWINE FLU'

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This last winter the stories on 'Swine Flu' and the potential lethal nature of this virus were in the news most every day. Government agencies around the world were feverishly working to understand the nature of this virus and how to protect us from exposure, or if we were exposed how to minimize how sick we'd get. No question it is coming. The only question is when and how hard will it hit.

News stories are circulating now that warn us to prepare for a world-wide pandemic (*pandemic: pan=all, demic = people*). Should we be paying attention and what can we do?

Well what do we know:

- 1) This flu acts very similarly to the last pandemic flu of 1918 where over 20 million people died in that it's showing a similar age-related pattern of mortality (a large percentage of healthy, vibrant younger people who catch this flu are dying-not the sick and elderly). 50% of the cases of severe reactions to this flu are occurring in people 5 to 24 years old, a striking difference from the seasonal flu that attacks the elderly with weak immune systems. The other group at increased risk is healthy pregnant women. There is a 4-fold increased risk of death if you are pregnant and get the Swine flu. All of the pregnant women who died developed pneumonia. Listen to the video clip at www.theDr.com as to a common mechanism that sets us up for this overreaction of the immune system.
- 2) The first wave of the 1918 flu (A/M1N1) pandemic in the late Winter/early Spring was mild, whereas 6 months later in the Fall and Winter, there was a second wave with much greater mortality. This is exactly what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fears-that the 'rebound' is coming as soon as schools open, rather than in October or November and that this flu exhibits the same age-related pattern of mortality where most infections and most serious cases are in children and healthy young adults.

In our country, the CDC hopes to have vaccinations available by October. But we now know this may be late-that a concern is that we're going to get a 'double-barreled' flu season-the Swine Flu as early as the first week of September (when schools are back in session) into the early Winter and the seasonal outbreak of regular flu starting later and peaking in February as it usually does.

The difference between a regular flu epidemic and a pandemic is that the pandemic is characterized by unusually severe and rapid progression of the disease (people get very sick, with potential death, rapidly). In 1918, healthy young adults left for work in the morning and never came home.

Pandemics occur every 25 years or so; severe ones, every 100 years or so. In 1918, the Spanish flu killed more than 500,000 Americans. The last pandemic, the Hong Kong flu, occurred in 1968, killing 34,000 Americans. We're about due for a 'Big One', so, yes, it's time to pay attention.

The U. S. Health and Human Services announced that the likelihood of an influenza pandemic is now an "absolute certainty".

How to prepare:

There are three steps you can take to protect from and reduce exposure to the flu (Swine Flu included) and to shorten the course of illness if you do get sick.

- Strengthen your immune system. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
- Be prepared to respond immediately to the first signs of an exposure. Stock your medicine cabinet with known effective antiviral, antibacterial nutritional support.
- Cleanse your environment to reduce exposure to "bugs".

BUILDING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

What steps can we take to build our immunity so that we don't get sick? This article will discuss three approaches that have been shown to strengthen resistance against flu "bugs" and provide information about remedies from a holistic perspective. Often times, the natural path using herbal medicinals may provide the protection and relief you seek against the flu for a cost savings.

First and most important, clean up your diet for the next few months. Eat less bad fats, less sugar, drink less pop, and give your kids less fruit juice and more water (excess amounts of fruit juice and sugars cause blood sugar problems that weaken the immune strength of our bodies). Do the common-sense things that you know about and just haven't put completely into play yet.

Seasonal Factors

We can take care of ourselves, and prevent the onset and severity of the flu, if we understand the timing of the flu season itself. During the past 60 years, influenza epidemics and pandemics have occurred during the six months of the year of lowest solar radiation (when there's not much sun available)---above 30 degrees latitude in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

In the U.S., this means that all individuals who reside north of the Jacksonville (Florida), Houston (Texas) and San Diego (California) latitude are prone to getting influenza in the fall and winter. And, interestingly, outbreaks in the tropics

almost always occur during the rainy season (when there is not much sunshine, even when closer to the equator).⁴

We have known for years that exposure to sunlight increases Vitamin D levels, which is essential to building strong bones. However, in the last 10 years or so, we've also observed that Vitamin D is crucial to healthy function of the immune system, nervous system, brain function, cardiovascular function, prostate and ovarian health.³ Scientists now know that our lungs actually make Vitamin D on-site as they need it from raw materials circulating in the blood stream-so you want to make sure you have enough of the form of Vitamin D in your blood stream that is the raw material for your lungs to get what they need (more on that later).

But, how does Vitamin D protect us from the flu? There are a few different ways that it does this. But here's the most important method with regards to a pandemic.

In the pandemic of 1918, young healthy adults, in the prime of their lives in the morning, were drowning in their own inflammation by noon, and were gone by midnight. An overreaction of the immune system caused excessive mucous buildup in the lungs very quickly and they died of pneumonia. Why did this happen? Why did the immune system overreact? See the video at www.theDr.com on how this occurs.

In August, 2005, a group of German researchers showed that Vitamin D suppresses the overreacting immune response in the lungs so that, when an individual is exposed to airborne viruses and bacteria, the immune system response in the lungs is appropriate and not over-reactive.⁵ This is critical. With adequate amounts of Vitamin D intake before being exposed to a flu virus, the lungs have a better chance of a healthy response-shoot the bacteria, but don't shoot the host. It's a checks and balances system that says "enough already" and inhibits an overreaction. Without adequate levels of Vitamin D (in the raw material state that travels in the blood stream called cholecalciferol), the lungs can over-respond, get stuck in the 'fight or flight' response and begin destroying the lung tissue itself.

The *Journal of Tropical Pediatrics* reported a study citing aggressive treatment for vitamin D deficiency successfully prevented children from getting infections.⁶

In October, 2005, researchers (*Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology*) demonstrated vitamin D's benefits included controlling the immune system's response to autoimmune diseases and transplants.⁶

So we have very current and extremely compelling data that tells us vitamin D is likely to help prevent the overreaction of the immune system (which is the primary mechanism of death with this flu).

The incidence of Vitamin D insufficiencies is epidemic (especially at this time of year).⁵ The insufficiency makes us vulnerable to 'overreacting' if exposed to a flu virus, and that could be fatal. And it's such an easy thing to address. Just take adequate amounts of Vitamin D. Seems simple enough. But what are 'adequate' amounts?

In my office, every new patient is checked for Vitamin D levels (technically called 25-Hydroxy Vitamin D). Every new patient, because the need is epidemic in the Midwest (and anywhere above 30 degrees latitude). With the proper blood test performed, we then know how much Vitamin D to recommend to raise the levels quickly. So see your health care practitioner, and request this test-it's less than \$100, which in the time of a pandemic, may very well contribute to saving your life. We want Vitamin D blood levels between 50-100 ng/ml.

If you are unable to get a blood test done, here are some guidelines from the Vitamin D Council: 'Professor Robert Heaney believes healthy blood levels may require up to 4,000 units a day for those with no sun exposure. Most people need to take more in the winter than the summer. Big people need more than little people. Children over 50 pounds need up to 2,000 units a day. Under 50 pounds, about 1,000 units a day. There is no way to know for sure how much you need without a blood test, called 25-hydroxy-vitamin D. That test should be conducted in the late winter, when your levels are the lowest, and at the beginning of fall, when your levels are the highest. Then you can figure out how much you need to take to keep stable levels. Or adults can simply take 4,000 units a day, every day, except for those late spring, summer, and early fall days when you go into the sun.'⁸

There is a new form of Vitamin D called GS D-3, which is a 'Micellized' Vitamin D, that researchers have just discovered is absorbed 5 times better than any other form of Vitamin D so our bodies can use it quickly and efficiently. A few drops on the tongue as a preventative and you're 'good to go' giving your lungs the raw material to make as much activated Vitamin D as they will need to fight this virus. More on this at www.theDr.com.

Independent researchers have shown that with as little as 5 DROPS a day, results show a 20% increase in Vitamin D levels within 60 days. The increase is dose dependent!!!

If you feel the symptoms of the flu coming on, IMMEDIATELY begin taking large dosages of Vitamin D. For children 10 drops of GS D-3 per day. For adults 20 drops. Get on it hard, get on it fast. These dosages have been demonstrated to be safe and effective.

OK. The above information talks about how to reduce your risks of overreacting if exposed to the flu virus. But how do we make sure we can respond appropriately to a viral exposure?

RESPONDING TO AN EXPOSURE

An essential tool in your medicine cabinet ready to be used in case of an emergency is Biocidin Advanced Formula Throat Spray. I personally carry it with me everywhere I travel. This formula is incredible. My patients have consistently appreciated the protection it has afforded them in otherwise vulnerable situations (airplanes, crowded rooms, having the first signs of a sore throat,...). This throat spray knocks out infections in the throat and nasal passages fast. Biocidin Advanced Formula provides a broader spectrum of protection than any single herb alone. United States Pharmacopia (USP) Effectiveness Tests demonstrated that pathogens are completely eliminated in a matter of hours, and do not return. The follow up tests went for 30 days-no new infections.

The pathogens tested, and stopped dead in their tracts, include:

- the most common bacterial infection (Escherichia coli) that causes urinary tract infections, pneumonia, and diarrhea, ¹⁰
- the bacterial infections commonly caught in hospitals (Staphylococcus aureus), and
- the most common type of yeast infection (Candida albicans). ¹¹

This is one great product to have in your tool kit to be used both as a preventative and as a therapeutic tool.

As a preventative, two squirts once or twice per day. As a therapeutic (sore throat coming on) 2 squirts as much as every waking hour. ⁹

Biocidin Throat Spray, Advanced Formula is available at the same web site <http://www.thedr.com/store>. The product code is BIOC9, under the Emerson Ecologics Tab in the Store.

CLEANING UP THE ENVIRONMENT

Sometimes it is not possible to avoid being around sick people. Scientists tell us communal work spaces (or where people are walking by), health clubs, riding the train to and from work, airplanes, etc... can expose us to millions of bacteria and viruses that will easily overwhelm a weakened or vulnerable immune system. If you can't avoid being in such an environment, at least we can reduce the numbers of bacteria and viruses we are exposed to.

Air ionizers in the home or office may help to neutralize airborne viruses. Also, the use of a cool mist humidifier, filled with a 2-to-1 combination of water and hydrogen peroxide (two bottles of water and one bottle of H₂O₂) is often very helpful.

But sometimes these things aren't practical. What every doctor would likely agree to is that your first line of defense in the environment is hand washing. Most flu infections occur via hand-to-mouth, hand-to-nose, and hand-to-eye transmission. Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw of Life-Enhancement suggest carrying a small flip-top squeeze bottle of Rubbing Alcohol with you, for convenient anywhere/anytime hand washing. (Remember that Rubbing Alcohol is flammable, so don't use it near flames or while smoking). Actually Don't Smoke ☺.

So here you have it. Our government tells us that it is not 'if' there will be another pandemic-it's just a question of 'when'. Our epidemiologists tell us pandemics occur about every 25 years or so (the last one was in 1966). And the Big Ones occur about once every hundred years or so (the last one was in 1918). So yes, we are due soon for another pandemic and possibly a 'Big One'.

And here's a simple, inexpensive protocol that will help you tremendously in preparing for this flu season. First, protect your environment as much as you can. Wash your hands many times per day if you're not at home, and use Rubbing Alcohol if a sink is not available. Second, test your Vitamin D levels (the goal is to be between 55 and 100 ng/ml). If you can't get your blood tested, then take some extra Vitamin D at the dosage guidelines below. And third, should you feel yourself coming down with something, have Biocidin available for a spur-of-the-moment response to any sore throats or first signs of feeling that you may have a flu bug coming on. Keep it in your purse, keep it in your car, keep it in your briefcase, just keep it nearby. That way, it's more likely to be accessible to you right away in these next few months. You may be happy you did.

Dr. John Cannell, the head of the Vitamin D Council calls it a variation of Pascal's Wager, and I'd summarize it this way:

"If you believe vitamin D may help fight the flu and you are wrong, you lose nothing, whereas if you believe vitamin D may help fight the flu and you are right, your family may live. But if you do not believe Vitamin D may help fight the flu and you are right, you gain nothing, whereas if you do not believe Vitamin D may help fight the flu and you are wrong, your family may die." 12

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