

“The Natural Flu Vaccine”

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Every day Americans wake up to news reports that warn us about the dangers of influenza, especially the new H1N1 “swine flu”. Before you decide on getting vaccinated, you need to know the facts and treatment alternatives.

Influenza (flu) is a respiratory infection caused by viruses. When people get flu, they may have fever, chills, headache, dry cough, or muscle aches. Illness may last several days or a week or more and complete recovery is usual. However, complications may lead to pneumonia or death in some people.

The CDC states that every year regular influenza is associated with complications that lead to the deaths of about 36,000 Americans. However, there has been controversy about whether that figure is accurate or potentially overestimates influenza deaths by including non lab-confirmed cases that resemble influenza but are actually due to flu-like illnesses caused by non-influenza viruses and bacteria. (Only about 20 percent of all flu-like illness is due to type A or B influenza and most people, young and old, recover without serious complications from influenza).

The fact is millions of people around the world have recovered from the flu and millions more will get sick with fevers, body aches, nasal congestion, cough and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting and recover from it this year and next year without any complications. More Americans die from asthma and even malnutrition each year, than the flu.

People, who recover from influenza, including swine flu, get long lasting protection from the flu strain they recovered from. Actually, most people over 60 won't get swine flu this year because they recovered from influenza caused by a similar swine flu strain in the past and still have protective antibodies.

Natural immunity is long-term and what most Americans do not know is that getting the flu vaccine does not offer long-term immunity and that whether or not it provides any immunity, including short-term, is questionable.

A study published in the October 2008 issue of the Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine found that vaccinating young children against the flu had no impact on flu-related hospitalizations or doctor visits during two recent flu seasons.

A 2008 study published in the Lancet found that influenza vaccination was NOT associated with a reduced risk of pneumonia in older people.

The main ingredient in a vaccine is either killed viruses or live ones that have been attenuated (weakened and made less harmful). Flu vaccines can contain a number of chemical toxins, including ethylene glycol (antifreeze), formaldehyde, phenol (carbolic acid), mercury and even antibiotics like Neomycin and streptomycin.

In addition to the viruses and other additives, many vaccines also contain immune adjuvants like aluminum and squalene.

The swine flu vaccine has been tested for only a few weeks on a few thousand healthy children and adults, including very few pregnant women. We don't know how safe it really is for pregnant women or children and adults with chronic illness even though they are being specially targeted for vaccination by government health officials. There is very little information about how safe it is to give swine flu vaccine with other vaccines, including seasonal influenza vaccine.

All pharmaceutical products, including vaccines, come with side effects. The risk of having a vaccine reaction depends upon the vaccine you are getting; your personal and family medical history; whether you are sick or healthy at the time of vaccination; whether you are taking other medications; and whether you have reacted to vaccines before.

To prevent and treat influenza or flu-like respiratory illness that does not involve fever over 103 F., pneumonia or serious complications which may require medical intervention, the National Vaccine Information Center offers the following non-toxic suggestions:

1. Wash your hands frequently.
2. Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
3. If you are sick, avoid close contact with those who are well.
4. Cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze.
5. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water.
6. Get adequate sleep.
7. Eat a healthy diet rich in vitamins and minerals, especially foods containing vitamin C (such as citrus fruits) and vitamin D (such as cod liver oil) and spend a few minutes a day in sunlight to help your body make and store vitamin D.
8. Exercise regularly when you are well.
9. Lower stress.
10. Consider including holistic alternatives in your wellness or healing plan, such as chiropractic adjustments, homeopathic and naturopathic remedies, acupuncture and other health care options.

Homeopathic remedies have been formulated to act as a natural flu vaccine and support the immune system without toxic side effects. Carefully selected ingredients such as Echinacea provide seasonal protection against the current flu viruses, improves recovery time from symptoms, and boosts the body's immune system. Injections of Echinacea can be used as a "natural" flu vaccine.

There are three types of Echinacea: Echinacea purpurea, Echinacea pallida, and Echinacea angustifolia. All are used to boost the immune system and fight infections, but only the purpurea and pallida varieties have been definitively proven effective.

Echinacea safely helps to maintain systemic balance and immune system health. It has been proven to be beneficial in relieving the common symptoms of influenza such as coughs, sneezing, congestion and fever.

Echinacea supports the immune system by activating white blood cells. Three major groups of constituents work together to increase the production and activity of white blood cells (lymphocytes and macrophages), including alkylamides/polyacetylenes, caffeic acid derivatives, and polysaccharides.

Echinacea also increases production of interferon and interleukins which are an important part of the body's response to viral infections. Several double-blind studies have confirmed the benefit of Echinacea for treating colds and flu.

Because of its effects on the immune system, you should not take this herb if you have multiple sclerosis, AIDS, tuberculosis, leukemia, and autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. Do not take Echinacea injections if you have an allergy to the plant or members of the sunflower and daisy families.

Americans need to be better informed of the potential health benefits versus the risks of getting the flu vaccine. Prevention measures need to be taken even if one gets the vaccine, as the effectiveness is still unknown. Natural remedies and therapies have stood the test of time regarding effectiveness and we have these tools readily available. Stay healthy this "flu" season, naturally!