

COLD & FLU—PREVENTION, TREATMENT & CURE

There are a great many tools that one can use to avoid getting seriously sick during the cold and flu season, and I would like to review the ones with which I am familiar:

First off: High vitamin D blood levels greatly enhance the rate at which white blood cells attack viruses and bacteria.

Dr. John C. Cannell, M.D., a vitamin D researcher, was for many years the doctor in charge of a ward at Atascadero State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Knowing that vitamin D deficiency leads to emotional instability, and wanting to have less problems with his insane criminals, he blood-tested all his inmates for vitamin D and supplemented them up to 50-60 nanograms per milliliter (ng/ml) of vitamin D in their blood. One winter, an epidemic of flu swept through the hospital. The ward across the hall was quarantined, and the wards on either side of Dr. Cannell's ward were quarantined. Yet none of Dr. Cannell's high-vitamin-D inmates got flu. That's how big a deal vitamin D is in resisting respiratory infection.

People digest, absorb and utilize vitamin D with different efficiencies, so if you don't have the money for several vitamin D blood tests, we just have to guess. My best guess is to recommend taking approximately 400 IU of vitamin D per day for every 10 pounds of body weight. That would be 4,000 IU/day for a 100 pound person. A more precise way of letting the body set its vitamin D blood levels exactly where it wants them is to go to a tanning salon twice a week, and use a "low pressure" (fluorescent-tube lamps) tanning bed that produces 3-5% ultraviolet B (UVB) and 95-97% ultraviolet A (UVA) light. UVB is the vitamin D light, but you don't want too much of it because it's also the burning light. Start with 3 minutes and work up a minute at a time until you find the most comfortable dose for you. It could be anywhere from 4 to 25 minutes, depending on your skin. Cover your face and throat with a towel, as these areas wrinkle easily and get plenty of sun during day-to-day exposure.

A German study published in 1998 showed that 6 weeks of tanning 2 or 3 times a week nearly doubled the rate at which white blood cells attack disease organisms (84% increase). That's huge. Mixed UVA-UVB light in large doses can cause nonfatal squamous and basal skin cancer, but in routine, non-burning doses also inhibits and prevents frequently-fatal melanoma skin cancer and a host of deadly internal cancers (breast, colon, prostate, lung, lymphoma, etc.) that kill hundreds of thousands Americans each year. Removing squamous and basal skin cancer just got a lot less expensive: the British are using a cream called Curaderm or BEC5, available on the internet, to dissolve squamous and basal skin cancer over a period of 2 weeks with twice-daily application. I have used it several times on cancers that began with severe sunburns in the 1980s, and it definitely does work.

As people get older, their skin produces less and less vitamin D from any particular amount of ultraviolet B light, which is one reason that people get more internal cancer as they get older. So I recommend that people over 55 use supplements to get their blood levels in the ballpark, and then do tanning to let the body set its vitamin D exactly where it wants to.

Diet is a big deal too. The more you eat of fruits, leafy green vegetables, cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, collards, etc.) and yellow-orange-red vegetables, and the less you eat of sugar, cheap fats, and refined flour products, the healthier you will be this winter. As Dr. Neal Barnard says, "Your new 4 basic food groups are fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes (beans & peanuts)." And keep the intake of animal products way down.

Okay, but if you're like me, sometimes you get too busy to go to a tanning salon twice a week, and you forget to take your vitamin D; so, of course, you start coming down with a cold or flu. Here's what to do:

- 1) Immediately take ten-times your daily dose of vitamin D on two consecutive days. For a 100-pound person, that will be 40,000 IU each day. Don't worry: you won't die. A medical study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association gave participants single doses of 500,000 IU of vitamin D with no ill effects.
- 2) Go to a health food store and buy a nasal spray called "Xlear", a bottle of zinc lozenges, a large bottle of 1,000 mg vitamin C tablets, and either a large bottle of "Tussin" or a large package of "Mucinex".
- 3) Xlear contains xylitol, a sugar-alcohol that tastes sweet and makes it difficult for bacteria and viruses to attach to you or each other. Use the nasal spray whenever you feel congestion or discomfort in your nasal passages. Tilt your head and aim the nozzle so the spray gets to the irritated areas. If massive spraying with Xlear doesn't stop your nasal infection cold, bring your empty Xlear bottle to me and I will refill it with my own herb-and-xylitol mix that seems to kill everything but us. Xlear costs about \$15; my refills go for \$10.
- 4) Start slow-dissolving zinc lozenges in your mouth. Keep in mind that what makes zinc lozenges so effective is the amount of time that the zinc salts bathe the tissues of the throat, rather than the amount of zinc you swallow. So let them dissolve in your mouth as slowly as you can, and follow one after another every 2 hours until you feel better. You should probably call a halt at 200 mg of zinc per day, because zinc can make you sick if you get too much of it. Zinc lozenges are astoundingly effective against sore throats.
- 5) Start taking guaifenesin every hour. Guaifenesin is the active ingredient in Tussin (or Robitussin) and Mucinex. It's an old drug that made Robitussin justifiably famous as a treatment for colds in the 1950s. It relieves lung, nasal and sinus congestion by liquefying mucus and speeding the sweeping of mucus and pathogen junk out of the respiratory tracts and into a Kleenex. It's an extremely safe drug, and, like zinc lozenges, astoundingly effective, although I've found that, perhaps because of my size, I have to take twice the recommended dose. I once had a darling little cat who had bronchitis so bad that I could hear the mucus clicking in her lungs. I forced a huge (for a cat) dose of Tussin down her throat with a dropper, and cured her in one dose.
- 6) Start taking 3,000 mg of vitamin C every hour until you start bloating, gurgling, getting gassy, and getting loose bowel movements. At that point, decrease the dose and frequency of taking vitamin C just enough so you stay gassy and have mild diarrhea, until you are completely well. If you get kidney pain, stop the vitamin C. The problem will go away with no harm done.
- 7) Okay: if, after all that, you're still sick, what to do? If you've had lung congestion for more than a week, or if, in less than a week, you're losing lung capacity, or if you're in bed or lying on the

floor, and so weak you don't want to move, it's time to go to a regular medical doctor. If it's bacterial, you will get a prescription for azithromycin or doxycycline. In my experience, doxycycline works better but is more expensive. If it's viral, they will want to give you Tamiflu which will cost about \$140. Ask for Amantadine, which will cost you about \$14. I can't witness to the effectiveness of Tamiflu, but it would be hard to beat Amantadine, which will have you feeling a lot better in 3-5 hours. You may have to call around to find a pharmacy that stocks it because it's a very old drug that expired its patent in the 1960s, and the "Medical-Industrial Complex" doesn't want you using something that old and cheap and effective when you could be using something new and expensive and less well-proven. Amantadine is a very interesting drug: it has been proven to have no effect on the viruses that cause influenza A and B, yet it cures the disease, apparently from changing some function of our cells so that the viruses can't attack them. Another interesting thing about Amantadine is that it stops progression of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, the human form of (supposedly untreatable) mad cow disease, but the brakes stay on the disease only as long as the person is kept on Amantadine.

- 8) And now, a word about chiropractic: Chiropractic adjusting does the same thing for the immune system that vitamin D does. It speeds up the rate at which our white blood cells attack disease organisms in our bodies. That's why the kids of chiropractic families don't get sick as much as other kids (in addition to the fact that chiropractors and their families usually avoid junk food).
- 9) And further, a word about those other alternative health doctors: naturopaths and acupuncturists and oriental medicine doctors. They all have health benefits to offer, and the people who go to them do feel and act healthier. But I don't pretend to be an authority on their professions. You will have to ask them what they can do for you. Massage therapy also helps people feel better, especially in the colder months.

Now you know as much about staying healthy during the colds-&-flu season as I do. You'll be ready to run 100 miles any day now, without being laid out by a cold or by flu.