

An Holistic Approach to the Flu Vaccine-to have or to avoid??

Exploring the flu vaccine controversy - a naturopathic, self-help perspective

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Every year, this vexing question pops up again, surrounded by a lot of misunderstanding or confusion. Many people don't know whether it is a good idea or not, while others simply take the vaccine without any further thought... "because their doctor has suggested it". Unfortunately, what may seem like a "small jab," can have some nasty consequences. Let's examine some of the issues around the flu vaccine in particular.

The reality is that flu viruses can nowadays literally "fly" around the entire planet within a matter of days. A flu which starts in London today may already be spread to our shores within a mere 24 - 48 hours, safely tucked away in a nice incubator called a "passenger." With the huge international traffic of people from various genetic backgrounds, this potential for rapid spread of a virus through many different climates and ethnicities creates a powerful evolutionary pressure on the bug, causing it to constantly mutate. The likelihood therefore of a past flu virus being exactly the same as the one to create the next epidemic is minimal. Yet, flu vaccines can ever only be made on *past* strains of flu viruses.

Even though the pharmaceutical industry does attempt to make a vaccine based on a number of the most likely viral candidates for any up and coming flu epidemic, these are viral strains that are already quite "old" and the truth is that the amount of coverage one is likely to actually end up getting from such a vaccine have been estimated to be as low as 25-30%.

Most vaccines contain a plethora of toxins

The next level to the debate is the simple reality that most vaccines contain a significant amount of highly toxic material such as formaldehyde (a carcinogen); phenol or carbolic acid; ethylene glycol (anti-freeze); aluminium and thiomerosal (mercury), which are often

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added as preservatives or adjuvants. ^(1,2,5) These are known to have damaging effects on our bodies and especially the immune system. It is a scientific fact that absolutely *no* amount of mercury is safe to take into the body.

Vaccinations can temporarily compromise immune function

It is also scientifically known that vaccinations can have a temporary suppressive effect on the immune system. ^(3,4) It has been found that for a few days after a vaccination, the immune system in an otherwise healthy person can fall to such an extent that it looks as if the person is in a full-blown AIDS like state. This does reverse itself, but means that our bodies are more vulnerable to any bugs going around while the immune system has been compromised for those days.

It is also a scientific fact that our bodies don't produce protective antibodies overnight to the virus strains used in a vaccine. This too can take quite a few days before enough immunity has been generated to provide any potential protection. But as explained above, the fact is that the level of coverage any vaccine can provide for *future* strains of flu virus is minimal anyway.

The dangers of having a flu vaccine right in the middle of an epidemic

This also brings up the fact that the worst choice a person can make is to have a flu vaccine when the community at large is actually experiencing an epidemic, causing you to be surrounded by many people who already have the flu and are therefore contagious. If at this point in time you go and have a flu shot - thereby temporarily depressing your immune system as explained above - while it also hasn't had a chance to make any protective antibodies yet, then you will be at your most vulnerable, and the chances of you actually catching the flu from the many people coughing and sneezing around you is extremely likely.

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It's all about a risk: benefit assessment

What all this means is that:-

- The flu vaccine provides little guarantee that you will be protected against whatever mutated strain of future flu virus comes along.
- The vaccination process itself can severely compromise your immune system – albeit for a few days to a week. However, if you are exposed to a flu virus during this window of weakened immune function, you are almost guaranteed to actually catch the flu and fall ill. Ever wondered why so many people still end up getting the flu shortly after having received their “protective” vaccination?
- Most vaccines contain significant amounts of highly toxic substances, which can have a cumulatively damaging effect as one has these yearly flu vaccines.

These are all ***definite*** risks one encounters upon taking the flu vaccine. On the other hand, the risk of getting flu in any particular year is a ***possibility*** rather than a *definite* actuality. So, deciding whether to have the flu vaccine or not is really a matter of risk: benefit assessment, with the above information giving a clearer understanding of the risks involved in having that seemingly innocuous “jab.”

Not having the flu vaccine doesn't then mean we just hope for the best! There are definitely a range of things which can be done to help minimize the chances of catching flu or minimize the severity of a flu once caught. These will be discussed below.

The issue then to this whole vaccination debate is to understand that being alive is a fundamentally risky business. Indeed, catching flu can be dangerous, if not lethal, especially to those with a weakened constitution or who are immune-compromised. Yet, taking a flu vaccine doesn't guarantee you'll actually be covered for the flu strain you might encounter during the next epidemic, but it does present *definite* risks to your health as described above.

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It therefore becomes an issue of weighing up the pros and cons to the risks involved and making a choice on such assessment. Hopefully, this brief article has provided further information upon which to make your own more informed decision as to what to do in regard to the flu vaccine.

A range of empowering options does exist

So what can you do to help minimize the risks of catching flu, or minimizing the severity and possibility of complications from such a flu if you already have it?

There are a range of safe, natural treatment options which can be of great help here:-

SCHUESSLER TISSUE SALT - "FERRUM PHOS. 6X - ("Martin & Pleasance" brand)

This is like a **homeopathic** version of iron phosphate, and is very effective in reducing inflammation, especially in colds and flu. Most health food stores will stock it. It is easy to take and very safe to use, and at the first sign of a sore throat – or other signs of inflammation – take a dose every ½ hour initially, by dissolving it under the tongue. Carefully follow the other instructions on the bottle.

"Martin & Pleasance" also make an even better combination remedy called "Comb-T - 1st stage of illness", which contains the Ferrum phos, plus extras. Again, dose as per above.

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CATS CLAW HERB

You can obtain a good quality Cats claw tablet or tincture from your herbalist or the health food store. If you know you are being exposed to a flu, by workmates for instance, or at the first sign of a possible infection, such as a raspy/sore throat or repeated sneezing, then grab for this herb and start taking double to treble the recommended dose on the container.

This is perfectly safe to do for a brief period, such as a week or so - or during the entire time of feeling ill with flu.

*(The jury is still out as to the safety of Echinacea in such specific flu strains as the swine or bird flu. What is needed is an immune **modulator** (balancer) rather than an immune **stimulant**, with some data suggesting that stimulation of an immune system fighting such specific flu strains may be counter-productive)*

VIT. C

This is another very safe, natural remedy which can be taken at very high oral doses, certainly for brief periods of time. Again, if you have been exposed or feel the beginnings of a flu coming on, then start taking ½ to 1 generous teasp. of the powder format every 2-4 hours. If you end up taking too much, you might feel a bit bloated, gassy or develop loose stools. Simply cut back on the dose or the frequency of your Vit. C and soon these symptoms will settle. Then keep taking the C, but at a dose that does not stimulate a recurrence of such symptoms.

If you did get the flu, and as you start getting better you'll notice that you won't need as much of the Vit. C. Simply "listen" to your body and adjust the dose downwards accordingly.

ZINC

You can also obtain good quality zinc supplements from your herbalist or health food store, and take 30 mg *elemental* 3 x day. (Check with a

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knowledgeable person in the store to ensure you actually do get this amount of *elemental* zinc). Such an amount is safe for a week or so, after which you could cut back to about 30-40 mg *elemental* zinc per day.

Zinc may come in different formats, each using a unique “carrier” molecule attached to the actual amount of zinc in the tablet. For instance, although a tablet may say “zinc gluconate” 150 mg/tablet, as much as 120 of these milligrams may be made up of the carrier molecule i.e. “gluconate.” The rest is the actual amount of zinc in the tablet, and is indicated as the “elemental” amount. So check your containers carefully to get an idea of how much *actual* zinc you are getting from your tablet.

VIT. A

Here we need to use the real vitamin, not the precursor beta-carotene. It also needs to be taken at high doses – temporarily – such as 15,000 - 25,000 i.u. daily. ***This is perfectly safe if taken for a short period only of 5-10 days.***

VIT. D

We are presently becoming aware of just how deficient many people in our modern community are in this crucial vitamin, with a major role in maintaining immune health. This vitamin is not just for ‘healthy bones!’

You can have your Vit. D status easily checked via a blood test. However, it is vital that your level be well above the presently accepted base level of ‘normality’, so unless you get a reading no less than 100-115 nmol/L, it would be wise to take this vitamin in a supplemental format, at a dose of at least 1,000 – 2,000 i.u./day till further blood tests show you have achieved this level.

Vit. D takes a while to build up in the body, so it is better to check your levels before a flu season, and then start supplementation early if you are found to be deficient. Nevertheless, taking Vit. D during the flu itself

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is still better than nothing, and will work synergistically with Vit. A in boosting your immune defenses.

Several summary points to consider

The whole idea is to be pro-active and prepared as any flu season arrives.

It needs to be re-stated that the above regime, with its higher than usual doses is only for the **immediate, acute** situation:-

- if you feel sure you have been exposed to the flu, you can use the above regime as a prophylaxis
- or instigate this regime if you're getting the early symptoms of a flu, such as sneezing, sore throat or sniffly nose
- or you already have the flu in a full-blown format

Such doses should ***not*** be used for weeks or months on end, unless you are under the direct supervision of a nutritionally knowledgeable therapist.

The best results will obviously be obtained if you start the regime *as soon as you feel any early symptoms of a flu coming on, or you strongly suspect – or know - you've been exposed to a cold or the flu*. Waiting to see if it will or won't develop into flu, or whether it was just a bit of hayfever may end up with you in a full-blown flu. As the above preventative regime is remarkably safe, cheap and easy, it is better to have treated a "false alarm," than leave it too late to nip in the bud.

The old scout motto of 'Be Prepared!'

However, to be able to maximize your ability to prevent a flu settling in, it is vital you have the appropriate "tools" right on hand. It is no good trying to buy all these items once you're starting to feel ill, because by

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the time you do so, the flu may have truly got a grip on your system, and you may not be well enough to go to the various shops or therapists to buy the necessary supplements.

Many other remedies do exist which can help prevent flu, or decrease the severity and duration of one if you already have it, but the above gives you at least a powerful beginning in helping to minimize the risk of getting a flu or treating it, compared to having the flu vaccine with all its attendant risks, yet little potential for actually protecting you from the next virus coming to our shores.

A final, and truly complementary suggestion

Hopefully, you now have a more solid foundation from which to make an informed decision about whether to have the flu vaccine or not. It is important to realize however, that this is a decision that only **you** can be responsible for. If the above information doesn't resonate for you, then it is crucial to go by your own gut instincts, and not by advice from others – as well meaning and researched as this may be.

So, if you're still not sure about skipping "the yearly jab," then there is another alternative which you might like to consider in regard to the flu vaccination dilemma. To help minimize the immune compromise that occurs after a vaccination, you could choose to take the above regime for 2-3 days before the "jab", and at least for 5 days afterwards. Vit. C has definitely been found to decrease the likelihood of side-effects from vaccination, ⁽⁶⁾ and all the other suggestions will still help maximize immune function.

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PLEASE NOTE

Be advised that no part of this article is intended as a form of diagnosis or prescription on physical, mental or emotional levels. If, after reading this article, the reader decides to instigate a change in their present therapeutic regime, then it is *imperative* they also seek out the professional advice of an appropriate specialist - either natural or medical.

The intent of the author is solely to provide information of an educational nature in the reader's quest to seek a greater understanding of the human condition. In the event the reader uses any information from this book with which to change their lives in any manner whatsoever, the author assumes no responsibility for your actions or any consequences.

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