

A Shot in the Dark

Thrive This Flu Season with a Safer Strategy than Shots

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“Hey Marsha, I was in to see my doctor the other day and he recommended that I get a flu shot. He said that my mom should come in for one, and that it was important even for Haley, my 18-month-old. What are you going to do? Are you really that worried about the flu? Are you taking your little kids in when they already get all those other vaccinations they say we have to do? I’m getting worried that it’s too much!”

Racing through the calendar, we are approaching “flu season” again. Prepare yourself to be warned repeatedly about the illness risks you are facing. Experts will exhort you to take extreme actions based on fear. You may even have come to expect sickness to “strike” you and your family this time of year. If you do become ill, it probably won’t be for the reasons you think. Bad bugs suddenly showing up at your door is not the best explanation.

Have you noticed that some people are frequently sick and others hardly at all? If it is all about the germs, then why are some in your home or office “catching” them and others rarely do? Louis Pasteur, the French chemist, bacteriologist, and father of the germ theory, initially believed external microbes that invaded the body caused all disease. He later came to a different conclusion, and before he died, acknowledged that the critical factor was the person’s internal environment.

You were designed to thrive amidst frequently hostile surroundings because you are endowed with an amazing self-regulating and self-healing body. This natural capacity is coordinated by your nervous system, which directs your immune response. We continually live with viruses and bacteria in and around us. We are made to coexist with them on this planet in a harmonious balance. They serve very important purposes in the life cycle of our personal and global ecosystems.

The real reason so many people get the flu or other illnesses isn’t bacteria or viruses but rather a weakened and impaired immune system. The single primary cause in our age is chronic stress. A persistent sense of external threat, which leaves us in a frequent

fight/flight anxiety state, interferes with nervous system communication and causes hormones to suppress our immune system. These factors interfere with our ability to fight disease.

According to cell biologist Dr. Bruce Lipton, author of the book *Biology of Belief*, “it is the nervous system’s job to monitor environmental signals, interpret them, and organize appropriate responses. When it recognizes a threatening environmental stress, like a germ exposure, it alerts the immune system to the danger so it can mobilize protective actions.”

When your nervous system is compromised in its ability to clearly convey intelligent information due to injury or stress-induced spinal misalignments, your immune function is disturbed.

If you become sick, the message is that your physiology has gotten out of balance. You become an available host for germs to multiply out of control.

The standard medical recommendation to prepare you for immune challenges is vaccination. Have you read any research verifying that the vaccine approach is both safe and effective? It is doubtful. Increasing numbers of respected scientists without pharmaceutical ties are greatly concerned. Many have declared flu shots ineffective at best, risky and dangerous at worst.

Flu shots continue to include the mercury-containing preservative thimerosal, which is a well-documented neurotoxic poison, as well as an array of other chemicals such as aluminum and formaldehyde. Mercury exposure alone can cause a devastating collection of problems including multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer’s disease, autism, and various central nervous system disorders. Are you still comfortable injecting this concoction directly into your veins or those of your loved ones?

Would the vaccine risk be worth it with a guarantee of effectiveness? I don’t think so, but consider the study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reported on in the January, 2004 New York Times. It concluded that the formula used that year protected zero to 14% of recipients. This is due to the fact that every year involves guesswork with flu strain formulation.

How about a safe, health nurturing approach instead of a dangerous crapshoot? It involves enhancing your inborn self-healing functions.

Dr. Joseph Mercola, an osteopath with one of the top health information websites, www.mercola.com, proposed six actions you can take to avoid getting the flu without dangerous shots:

- 1) Eat a healthy diet with a high vegetable intake, supported by healthy proteins like free-range chicken or grass-fed beef, and eliminate refined sugar.**
- 2) Participate in regular aerobic exercise of 30-60 minutes daily, gradually increasing the intensity.**
- 3) Get 7-8 hours of quality sleep per night.**
- 4) Eat fresh garlic regularly.**
- 5) Wash your hands frequently.**
- 6) Don't let stress become overwhelming.**

“My husband and I have studied and discussed these issues quite a bit Susan, and decided that we're not going to participate in the flu shot program. The key factor as we understand it is to do all we can to strengthen our own inner health. Then we'll be able to overcome whatever germs we're exposed to. Improved sanitation and diet were really the big advancements in reducing disease epidemics.

We breastfed all our kids for a full year to start them off with strong immune systems and now we're really trying to eat a balanced diet with a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables. We cut out most of the junk and fast food too, even though it wasn't easy at first. We have reoriented our priorities so our lives are less stressful and we're getting more exercise.

Only Mark and Jessica have gotten sick in the last 2 years since we began these changes. Mark was pushing too hard at work, but as soon as he got some extra rest, he was fine. Jessica had been eating too much sugar, which quickly weakens the immune system. We cut that out and got her taking some supplements and she recovered fast. Susan, I really think it's just a matter of taking the responsibility to be informed about positive health-sustaining actions and then sticking to them. Your family can succeed at that too. Give it a try and I bet you'll prove me right.”

Your body was designed to adapt and thrive marvelously in a world full of microbes long before vaccines existed. You can choose a lifestyle that supports your self-healing potential.

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