

Fear The Flu, Not Ebola

by Dr. Fred Pescatore

(NAPSA)—According to a poll conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health, 40 percent of Americans feel that they or their immediate family is at risk of getting Ebola. Yet with only a few confirmed cases of Ebola in the United States, the actual risk of contracting the disease is extremely low. In fact, other infections that don't hit the same emotional hot buttons as Ebola—such as MRSA, an antibiotic-resistant bacterial infection, and even the common flu—pose much more of a risk than Ebola to the average American. So what is a rational response to the Ebola virus?



Dr. Pescatore

Learn The Facts

Don't panic! Instead, educate yourself on these Ebola facts, and share what you learn with others.

1. Ebola is only moderately contagious. It is extremely infectious, meaning a very small amount of the virus can cause an infection. However, it is NOT airborne, as highly contagious viruses are. Like HIV, Ebola is passed through the bodily fluids of an infected person.

2. Ebola is only transmissible when symptoms are active. In other words, you cannot contract Ebola from someone who has the virus but is asymptomatic, or who has recovered from the infection.

3. The risk of an Ebola outbreak in the United States is very low. Because Ebola is not spread through casual contact, it is extremely unlikely that an outbreak will occur in this country.

Fear The Flu!

Considering these facts, it makes more sense to worry about less-hyped but much more common infections, such as influenza. You might be surprised to find out that the flu, which IS airborne, and is therefore highly contagious, kills between 3,000 and 49,000 people per year. (The number of deaths is dependent on multiple factors, such as which strains of the virus are spreading, how many people get vaccinated, and how effective the flu vaccine is against the strain that is causing illness.) In addition, complications of flu—including bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions—are also a concern. For this reason, the Centers for Disease Control recommends that everyone 6 months of age or older get a flu vaccine every season.

Another infection to fear more than Ebola is *Staphylococcus aureus*, particularly methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly known as MRSA. Often contracted through hospital stays, but now showing up in the wider community, MRSA bacteria are resistant to a wide spectrum of antibiotics—including methicillin, penicillin, oxacillin, and amoxicillin—and infection can be fatal. According to a study published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, MRSA was responsible for the deaths of 18,650 people in the United States in 2005—more than the 16,000 caused by AIDS.

Bolster Your Immune System

Aside from the obvious steps of washing your hands frequently and getting a flu shot, what's the best way to protect yourself against highly contagious infections such as the flu and MRSA? Bolster your immune defenses, because a strong immune system will help you stave off whatever infection your body has to confront. Here are three quick tips to strengthen your immunity.

1. Reduce your sugar intake.

It may seem benign, but sugar depresses immune function. Research as far back as 1973 shows that when people are administered 100 grams (or 20 teaspoons) of sugar (either as glucose, fructose, sucrose, honey or orange juice), the ability of white blood cells called neutrophils to engulf bacteria declines by 50 percent. The effect is observable within 30 minutes and lasts as long as five hours. You're not likely to ingest 100 grams of sugar in one sitting, but considering that a soda has 40 grams, it's easy to see how a few servings can add up.

2. Get enough sleep.

Sleep is not a luxury. It is absolutely essential for various body functions, including immunity. A recent study drove this point home. Volunteers snorted nasal drops that contained a cold-causing virus. Then they were monitored to see how much they slept and who caught a cold. Amazingly, people who slept less than seven hours a night were nearly three times as likely to get sick as those who got eight hours or more. Likewise, another study found that folks who were restricted to getting four hours of sleep nightly for six nights before receiving a flu vaccine only made half the amount of antibodies as normal.

3. Restore your peak immunity with a unique natural mushroom extract called AHCC®.



You can also give your immune system a natural boost by taking AHCC (short for Active Hexose Correlated Compound), a natural extract from the roots of Japanese medicinal mushrooms that has been extensively studied for its ability to stimulate immune response and protect against viral, bacterial and fungal infections. One of the distinguishing features of AHCC is its low molecular weight of 5,000 daltons, which is 1,000 times lower than that of most medicinal mushroom extracts. This is one of the attributes that provides AHCC with superior absorption and clinical efficacy.

The subject of more than 20 human clinical studies, AHCC is a highly effective immunomodulator. It is not directly anti-viral, anti-bacterial or anti-fungal. Rather, it works by making your immune system work better. Research has shown that AHCC increases the number and activity of several components of the immune system, such as cytokines (immune messengers), as well as natural killer cells, macrophages, T cells and dendritic cells (all types of white blood cells that destroy pathogens and abnormal cells).

AHCC has also been shown in a 30-subject human clinical study to increase the antibody response to the common influenza virus when combined with the seasonal flu shot. Interestingly, the flu shot alone did not produce a statistically significant response.

Given the facts, there is no rational reason to fear the Ebola virus. More common and contagious infections, such as the flu and MRSA, should be of much greater concern. However, taking the proper preventative steps outlined above can give you some peace of mind knowing you're giving your body the best chance of staving off any kind of infection.

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