

[IMAGE]

Debug Yourself Naturally

By Dr. John Maher

With the flu season upon us and a new flu strain (H1N1) on everyone's minds, there's no better time to discuss the importance of taking simple steps to protect your health and the health of your family, whether you're trying to reduce your risk of developing the flu (a virus) or protecting against an all-too-common bacterial infection, such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), which accounts for more deaths each year in the U.S. than AIDS and is increasing in incidence at an alarming rate.

swine flu - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Considering the rising potential of worldwide viral pandemics (SARS, avian flu, norovirus, H1N1) this winter, it is all the more imperative that we maximize personal hygiene. The only portals of entry of the H1N1 "swine flu" virus are the nostrils and mouth/throat. In a global epidemic of this nature, it's almost impossible to avoid coming at least into contact with H1N1 in spite of all precautions. However, contact with H1N1 is not so much of a problem as is its proliferation within the body.

While you are still healthy and not showing any symptoms of H1N1 infection, in order to prevent proliferation, aggravation of symptoms and development of secondary infections, some very simple steps, not fully highlighted in most official communications, can be practiced. Consider the following:

- Frequent hand-washing with regular soap or, even better, a hand cleanser with manuka honey (a type of honey produced by bees that harvest nectar from the flowers of the manuka bush, native to New Zealand). Make it a ritual habit. This is most important if you are already sick.
- Do not touch your face or nose if you can help it. This will reduce the likelihood that the virus will enter the body if it has been passed to you via a handshake or other hand-to-hand scenario.
- Gargle twice a day with warm salt water, or 1 tablespoon manuka honey and 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar in 1/4 to 1/2 cup of water; or even antiseptic mouthwash. H1N1 takes 2-3 days after initial infection in the throat/ nasal cavity to proliferate and show characteristic symptoms. Simple gargling prevents proliferation. In a way, gargling with salt water has the same effect on a healthy individual that Tamiflu has on an infected one. Don't underestimate this simple, inexpensive and powerful preventative method.

- Clean your nostrils at least once every day with warm salt water using a spray/ syringe applicator, or Neti pot, or even by "snorting" a palm full of salt water. Blowing the nose hard once a day and /or swabbing just the first 1/4 inch of your internal nostrils with Q-tips dipped in warm salt water are also effective in bringing down viral population.
- Boost your natural immunity with fresh fruits and vegetables that are rich in vitamin C. You may also supplement with 500 mg vitamin C tablets, preferably in lozenge form.
- Drink as much warm liquids as you can, especially green tea. Drinking warm liquids has the same effect as gargling, but in the reverse direction. It helps wash off proliferating viruses from the throat into the stomach, where they cannot survive, proliferate or do any harm.
- Weather permitting, get some fall / winter midday sun and fresh air with a brisk 15-minute walk. Getting out of confined spaces where germs can spread easily is key to preventing transmission of H1N1 and other flu strains.

MRSA Infection

MRSA is a type of staph infection that is resistant to antibiotics. Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently in health care facilities. While *Staph aureus* (including MRSA) is commonly found in the nasal cavity, most are skin infections. These may appear as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, painful or have pus or other drainage. These skin infections commonly occur at sites of visible skin trauma such as cuts and abrasions and areas of the body covered by hair, including the back of neck, groin, buttocks, armpits, and bearded area of men.

MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's infection. Five factors make it easier for MRSA to be transmitted. These factors, referred to as the five C's, are as follows: crowding, frequent skin-to-skin contact, cuts (or abrasions), contaminated items and surfaces, and lack of cleanliness.

kids washing hands - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Unfortunately, many antibiotic soaps are not very effective against MRSA, which has become increasingly resistant. Alcohol's effect does not last long and dries out the skin with frequent use. For those who desire a natural product for frequent daily hand washing and nail cleaning, Manuka honey is available for both personal protection and medical treatment via dermal application.

Unlike antibiotics, manuka honey destroys bacteria by drawing water out of the microorganisms by osmosis, research suggests. Bacteria have the ability to mutate and become resistant to elements that can destroy them. However, no bacteria can survive without water. That should prevent future Manuka-resistant strains from developing. Furthermore, all honeys produce an antimicrobial peroxide reaction upon application. Uniquely, Manuka honey contains high levels of the natural antimicrobial chemical methylglyoxal. Gels, foams, creams, sprays and bandages for personal protection and/or for wound healing are currently all available.

While soaps, hydrogen peroxide and rubbing alcohol can be used for surface cleaning, a more natural approach is to use products based on environmentally friendly, nontoxic ingredients like silver ions and citric acid. Plus, it is important to use products that are long lasting, as that will make actual daily compliance much easier.

boy bubble bath - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **Keep Probiotics "Handy"**

Healthy intestinal flora and fauna is also part of a robust immune system. An article in the May 8, 2006 online edition of *The Medical News Today* states "Current interest in probiotics is motivated ... by the increasing antibiotic resistance of pathogenic bacteria ... and the rise of consumers' demand for natural substitutes of drugs."

M. Spigelman, a British surgeon, has a novel idea concerning probiotics and MRSA prevention: "[A]ny student who has grown bacteria in a lab will know that they (bacteria) generally do not grow on top of one another. So when we wash our hands, we could actually be killing off harmless commensals to the extent that we leave space for other bacteria, such as MRSA strains, to settle ... Perhaps we should be thinking about using probiotics and even dipping our hands after thorough washing into a solution which contains harmless bacteria, which could then colonize our skin and prevent pathogenic bacteria from settling on it." Unfortunately, I am not aware of any such probiotic hand treatment on the market as of yet.

Strengthen Your Immune System

Of course, your doctor of chiropractic will also emphasize the import of a healthy neuro-immune system through spinal adjustments, proper rest, recreation, hydration and nutrition. In regard to the latter, the minerals zinc and selenium and the vitamins A, C and D are perhaps the best appreciated. One might also consider nutraceuticals like mushroom and thymus extracts or colostrum, or even homeopathic remedies. As

an example of the greater appreciation for the power of natural products, the American Society for Microbiology meeting in Atlanta in June 2005 included a presentation on a natural garlic extract, allicin, for treating MRSA.

De-Bugging Is Anti-Aging

As a closing thought, consider the following quote from Ronald Goldman, MD, co-founder of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine: "Chronic infection is a vastly underestimated cause of disease and disability. The public needs to be mindful that low-grade infections are estimated to potentially reduce the healthy human lifespan by up to 20 years, robbing them of a lifetime of bountiful energy, productivity, and happiness. Bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites may well be the single most important yet undiscovered cause of premature aging and the chronic degenerative disorders of aging that now plague Americans."

Protect yourself from the flu virus, MRSA, and the countless other "bugs" out there by taking natural, common-sense steps such as those outlined above. Talk to your doctor for more information.

people working out - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **Simple Steps to Protect Against the Flu Virus**

- Wash hands frequently with soap or other natural cleansers
 - Gargle with warm salt water, honey and apple cider vinegar, antiseptic mouthwash, etc.
 - Flush nostrils with salt water
 - Boost natural immunity with sound nutrition
 - Drink adequate liquids including green tea
-

The Five C's of MRSA Transmission

- Crowding,
- Contact (skin to skin)
- Cuts (or abrasions)
- Contaminated items and surfaces
- Cleanliness (lack of)

John Maher, DC, is a chiropractor in current practice in Valley Center, Calif. He is also director of education and research for Nutragen, a nutritional supplement company.

Page printed from:

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=1267&pagenumber=3&no_paginate=true&no_b=true