

Almost every day we are reading and hearing of the coming "bird flu." The media, doctors, and drug companies have been sadly effective in instilling great fear into the hearts and minds of the public. And they are adding fuel to the fear by "warning" the public that there are inadequate amounts of the flu vaccine for people and that this is particularly a problem for people, especially the elderly, who are most vulnerable to serious complications of the flu.

The problem here is that according to a new edition of the *Lancet* (1/10/2005), a systematic review of all previous studies testing vaccines for the flu show that they are NOT effective in preventing the flu or "influenza-like illness" or pneumonia in the elderly population. It is indeed a sad fact that the media and the medical community is instilling fear into people and yet not disclosing that the "prevention" strategy does not seem to work.

The other "at-risk" group that the the US Centre for Disease Control recommends getting a flu vaccine is children, and yet, an important article in the *Lancet* (26/2/2005) literally analyzed every available reference on the subject that they could find in the *Cochrane Library*, *Medline*, *Embase Biological Abstracts* and *Science Citation Index* to June 2004 - in any language. They included 14 randomized controlled trials, eight cohort studies, one case-control study and one randomized controlled trial of intra-epidemic use of the vaccine.

Surprisingly, they only found two small studies that assessed the effects of influenza vaccines on hospital admissions (the alleged reason for the CDC's recommendation). And they could not find a single study that assessed reductions in mortality, serious complications or even community transmission of the disease.

These studies provide significant doubt about the efficacy in preventing the flu with present vaccines.

The conventional treatment strategies for the flu are also problematic. In the US the most popular

conventional drug, *Tamiflu*, is an anti-viral, but it is quickly losing its efficacy because it is being over-used for the common flu, rather than for its more appropriate use in treating more dangerous versions of the flu, such as the new avian flu.

There are, however, good reasons that homeopaths and their patients are not afraid of the flu, either now or in the past.

Oscilloccinum

First of all, homeopaths have proven treatments for people with the flu. The strong word "proven" is purposefully used because there have been at least THREE large-scale double-blind, placebo-controlled trials using *Oscilloccinum* to treat people with the flu or with influenza-like syndrome.

For the record the three studies that have confirmed the efficacy of *Oscilloccinum* are Ferley, 1989; Cassanova, 1992; Papp, 1998. Each of these trials was relatively large in the number of subjects (487 patients, 300 patients, and 372 patients), and all were multi-centered placebo-controlled and double-blind (two of the three trials were also randomized). Each of these trials showed statistically significant results.

What is also important to know about this research is that each of the large clinical studies were conducted by independent researchers, and a treatment is considered "proven" when at least three independent studies verify positive results.

The trick to getting the best results with *Oscilloccinum* is to use it within 48 hours of onset of the flu. For the first signs of a cold or 'flu take every six hours.

One of the reasons that *Oscilloccinum* is so effective is because of what it is. It is made from the heart and liver of a duck (*Anas barbariae hepatis et cordis extractum*). Biologists have found that the vast majority of ducks have

various types of flu viruses in their digestive tracts, and because of this, epidemiologists have determined that ducks are one of the prime carriers of flu around the world. It seems that homeopathic doses of the flu virus and of the duck's antibodies to these viruses provides therapeutic benefits.

While many mothers (and grandmothers!) have recommended chicken soup for the flu, the use of *Oscilloccinum* is akin to using "duck soup." It seems that homeopaths have been on top of this issue of the "bird flu" way before the media began harping on its imminence.

Influenzinum

The 'flu injection is generally considered to be 68.2% effective on all people. A ten-year study in France in collaboration with 23 French homeopathic doctors found *Influenzinum* to be 90% effective. Flu injections are traditionally for older adults (55+), while *Influenzinum* can be used for all the family.

So if you compare the *Influenzinum Combination* 30c to the conventional 'Flu injections you'll see that the *Influenzinum Combination* is far superior because it contains all the various known influenza viruses whilst 'Flu injections only usually contain the three influenza viruses that are predicted six months in advance to be widespread; that is why sometimes the injections are more effective than others.

Acute Colds & 'Flu

If it is over 48 hours since you or someone close to you has already had the flu, you need to take other homeopathic medicines commonly indicated for the flu. In most cases it is easy to choose between the *ABC* and *AGE* combination remedies.

ABC (*Aconite*, *Belladonna*, *Chamomilla*)
For colds and flu's with high fever, heat, redness, sore throat, rapid onset of symptoms (Wind-Heat). Take 3-4 times a day.

AGE

(*Arsenicum iodide, Gelsemium, Eupatorium*)

For colds and flu's with chilliness, aching, tiredness, paleness, more gradual onset of symptoms (Wind-Cold). Take 3-4 times a day.

Coughs

Once a cold or 'Flu has gone onto the chest or into the larynx resulting in a cough the homeopathic remedy needed has to be individualised for each patient. At this point it may be better to seek professional advice from a homeopath. However some keynotes of a few common remedies are as follows:

Bryonia: Hard, racking, dry cough where the person holds the chest during the cough because the chest is painful from coughing.

Phosphorous: Cough from changes of temperature, from either warm to cold or vice versa.

Drosera: Prolonged bouts of coughing, worse at night, often with gagging, retching, or vomiting.

Post Influenza Problems

Sometimes people fail to recover completely from the 'flu. I have two combination remedies which I may prescribe.

Post Influenza Combination

For weakness and slow recovery etc. 3-4 times a day and as needed.

Chronic Fatigue Combination

For chronic fatigue syndrome or M.E. Twice a day and as needed. *Only available on prescription to patients.*

Herbal Remedies

Some patients' immune system may be deficient that in some cases they may need to take herbs in addition to homeopathic remedies. I prescribe the following in those situations:

Immunodefence is a combination of twelve Western and Chinese herbs developed to boost the immune system and is taken daily (it can be

taken in conjunction with the Echinacea for acute conditions). £13/€20 for 300ml at the clinic (*patients only*).

Echinacea in herbal tincture or tablets has a reputation for boosting the immune system. Unfortunately it is often wrongly advised to be taken on a regular basis but it should be taken frequently at the start of a cold or flu. £5/€8 for 100ml at the clinic (*patients only*).

Cold, Flu & Injury Kit

Consists of six useful combination remedies:

Oscillocochinum, Influenzinum Combination, ABC, AGE, Injury Combination, Rescue Remedy

The remedies are in plastic vials in a ziploc bag and cost £18/€27 at the clinic (*patients only*) and £27/€40 mail order by phone or email. They and the other remedies are also available separately at £3/€5 each at the clinic (*patients only*) and £5/€7 mail order by phone or email.

References

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Homeopathy, Colds & Influenza

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