

The Alarming Reason Why Some People Die From Flu

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › While influenza can indeed be deadly in rare cases, these deaths are typically the result of secondary infections, not the flu virus itself
- › Research has highlighted the link between influenza and severe sepsis (blood poisoning). Symptoms of sepsis can mimic flu, and are often overlooked. Without prompt treatment, the condition can be deadly
- › Use of intravenous vitamin C, hydrocortisone and thiamine has been shown to reduce sepsis mortality nearly fivefold, from 40 to 8.5 percent
- › Optimizing your vitamin D level is a far more potent preventive strategy than getting a seasonal flu vaccine. People with significant vitamin D levels may reduce their risk of respiratory infections such as influenza by 50%
- › People with higher vitamin D levels may also benefit from additional vitamin D, reducing their risk of flu by 10%, which equals the effectiveness of the seasonal flu vaccine, including this year's vaccine

This article was previously published February 1, 2018, and has been updated with new information.

As the COVID pandemic enters its second year, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is ramping back up on its influenza recommendations, and stressing that it's

important to get a flu vaccine along with your COVID shots and boosters.¹ The CDC is urging everyone aged 6 months and older to get a flu shot, with rare exceptions.²

During the height of the pandemic, influenza cases appeared to drop or nearly disappear, but with the 2021-2022 flu season, more flu cases are being reported. By the end of December 2021, the CDC reported that two children had already died of flu, and that flu hospitalizations were rising quickly.³ But how many deaths and hospitalizations are actually due to flu?

Many Flu 'Deaths' Are Actually From Secondary Infections

While influenza can indeed be deadly in rare cases, what most health experts fail to tell you is that these deaths are typically the result of secondary infections, not the flu virus itself. Importantly, research has highlighted the link between influenza and severe sepsis — a progressive disease process initiated by an aggressive, dysfunctional immune response to an infection in the bloodstream (which is why it's sometimes referred to as blood poisoning).

Symptoms of sepsis are often overlooked, even by health professionals, and without prompt treatment, the condition can be deadly. Not only that, sepsis also goes hand in hand with COVID-19 infection, particularly in patients in intensive care with COVID.⁴

Unfortunately, conventional treatments often fail, and most hospitals have yet to embrace the use of intravenous (IV) vitamin C, hydrocortisone and thiamine,⁵ which has been shown to reduce sepsis mortality from 40% to a mere 8.5%.^{6,7}

How Influenza May Cause Lethal Sepsis

A decade and more ago, severe sepsis was generally associated with bacterial infections, but by 2013, viral infections like flu, and now COVID, had become a prominent cause of sepsis.⁸ To complicate matter even more, as noted in the video above, some sepsis symptoms also resemble influenza, which can lead to tragedy. The video offers guidelines on how to tell the difference between the two.

Sepsis, without doubt, requires immediate medical attention, whereas most people will successfully recover from the flu with a few days to a week of bedrest and fluids. Just how influenza can lead to sepsis is a somewhat complex affair, described as follows:⁹

“Regardless of the etiologic agent, the inflammatory response is highly interconnected with infection. In the initial response to an infection, severe sepsis is characterized by a pro-inflammatory state, while a progression to an anti-inflammatory state develops and favors secondary infections ...

In the predominant pro-inflammatory state, Th1 cells activated by microorganisms increase transcription of pro-inflammatory cytokines such as tumor necrosis factor (TNF- α), interferon- γ (INF- γ), and interleukin-2 (IL-2).

[C]ytokines ... released from endothelial cells and subsequently from macrophages can induce lymphocyte activation and infiltration at the sites of infection and will exert direct antiviral effects. Subsequently, with the shift toward an anti-inflammatory state, activated Th2 cells secrete interleukin-4 (IL-4) and interleukin-10 (IL-10).

In certain situations, T cells can become anergic, failing to proliferate and produce cytokines. Type I IFN has a potent anti-influenza virus activity; it induces transcription of several interferon stimulated genes, which in turn restrict viral replication. However, influenza virus developed several mechanisms to evade IFN response ...

Viral infections such as the influenza virus can also trigger deregulation of the innate immune system with excessive cytokines release and potential harmful consequences. An abnormal immune response to influenza can lead to endothelial damage ... deregulation of coagulation, and the consequent alteration of microvascular permeability, tissue edema, and shock.”

Signs and Symptoms of Sepsis

Common signs and symptoms of sepsis to watch out for include:¹⁰

- A high fever
- Inability to keep fluids down
- Rapid heartbeat; rapid, shallow breathing and/or shortness of breath
- Lethargy and/or confusion
- Slurred speech, often resembling intoxication

Should a few or all of these be present, seek immediate medical attention to rule out sepsis. Also inform the medical staff that you suspect sepsis, as time is of the essence when it comes to treatment. As noted in the featured video, hydration is of utmost importance, as much of the damage caused by sepsis begins with fluid loss.

Preventive Strategies to Reduce Your Chances of Infections

Your immune system is your first-line defense against all types of infections, be they bacterial or viral, so the most effective way to avoid coming down with flu is to bolster your immune function. While health officials claim getting an annual flu shot is the best way to ward off influenza, the medical literature actually suggests vitamin D optimization may be a far more effective strategy, and the evidence for this goes back at least a decade.

Dr. John Cannell, founder of the Vitamin D Council, was one of the first to introduce the idea that vitamin D deficiency may actually be a causative factor in influenza. His hypothesis¹¹ was initially published in the journal *Epidemiology and Infection* in 2006.¹² It was subsequently followed up with another study published in the *Virology Journal* in 2008.¹³

The following year, a large, nationally representative study¹⁴ confirmed that people with the lowest vitamin D levels indeed reported having significantly more colds or cases of the flu. Similar findings have been reported with vitamin D status and COVID, with several studies showing that persons with low vitamin D levels not only are more likely to be susceptible to the infection, but have a higher risk of hospitalization and death.^{15,16,17}

With flu, a number of studies confirm the importance of your vitamin D status in fighting this viral infection. In 2017, for example, a scientific review^{18,19} concluded that vitamin D supplementation boosts immunity and cuts rates of both cold and flu.

In all, 25 randomized controlled trials were included in the review, involving nearly 11,000 individuals from more than a dozen countries. People with significant vitamin D deficiency (blood levels below 10 ng/mL), taking a vitamin D supplement reduced their risk of respiratory infections such as influenza by 50%.

People with higher vitamin D levels also benefited, although not as greatly. Overall, they reduced their risk by about 10%, which the researchers stated was about equal to the effect of flu vaccines. Coincidentally, 10% was the effectiveness rate of the 2017-2018 flu vaccine.²⁰

The take-home message here is that vitamin D supplementation far exceeds the flu vaccine in terms of effectiveness, and the more deficient you are, the greater its protective effects when you supplement.

Aside from vitamin D, loading up on vitamins B1 and C may go a long way toward keeping you healthy through the flu season and beyond. Influenza has been successfully treated with high-dose vitamin C.²¹ Taking zinc lozenges at the first sign of a cold or flu can also be helpful.

Zinc boosts immune function and plays a vital role in activating your body's T cells (white blood cells tasked with destroying infected cells). If you fall victim to frequent bacterial infections or colds, your body might be trying to tell you it needs more zinc.

Be Aware of This Lifesaving IV Protocol

If you or a loved one contracts sepsis, whether caused by influenza or some other infection, please remember that a protocol of IV vitamin C with hydrocortisone and thiamine (vitamin B1) can be lifesaving.²² So, urge your doctor to use it. Chances are, they might not even be aware of it.

This sepsis treatment protocol was developed Dr. Paul Marik^{23,24} when he was a critical care doctor at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital in East Virginia, and clinical use has proven it to be remarkably effective for the treatment of sepsis, reducing mortality nearly fivefold.

Marik's retrospective before-after clinical study showed that giving patients IV vitamin C with hydrocortisone and vitamin B1 for two days reduced mortality from 40% to 8.5%. Of the 50 patients treated, only four died, and all of them died from their underlying disease, not sepsis. Importantly, the treatment has no side effects and is inexpensive, readily available and simple to administer, so you really have nothing to lose by trying it.

The only contraindication is if you are glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficient (a genetic disorder).²⁵ G6PD is an enzyme your red blood cells need to maintain membrane integrity.

High-dose IV vitamin C is a strong pro-oxidant, and giving a pro-oxidant to a G6PD-deficient individual can cause their red blood cells to rupture, which could have disastrous consequences. Fortunately, G6PC deficiency is relatively uncommon, and can be tested for.

People of Mediterranean and African decent are at greater risk of being G6PC deficient. Worldwide, G6PD deficiency is thought to affect 400 million individuals, and in the U.S., an estimated 1 in 10 African-American males have it.²⁶

Flu Vaccines Don't Usually Live Up to Their Hype

Sadly, flu deaths are inevitably used to incite fear, and the recommended remedy is annual flu vaccination, even when statistics show the vaccines don't perform the way they're hyped.

For example, in January 2015, U.S. government officials admitted that, in most years, flu shots are — at best — 50 to 60% effective at preventing lab confirmed type A or B influenza requiring medical care.²⁷ And, as mentioned, the 2017-2018 flu vaccine had an

effectiveness rating of just 10%, due to it being poorly matched, yet the call for flu vaccination remained.

Many also gloss over the fact that flu deaths also occur in those who have been vaccinated. Such was the case with this 8-year-old boy in Arkansas, featured in this CNN report.

Yet, despite year after year of dismal efficacy numbers, the CDC continues to push the flu vaccine. In December 2021, they said that, despite indications that the H3N2 protection for this season's vaccine may not live up to expectations, they still recommend getting the shot, as flu could be more serious in the 2021-2022 season:²⁸

"Flu vaccination has many benefits yet early data suggest the number of people who have been vaccinated so far this season is down, especially among certain higher risk groups such as pregnant people and children.

Lower vaccination rates and reduced population immunity resulting from historic low flu activity since March 2020 could lead to widespread flu, with more serious illnesses. With ongoing COVID-19 activity, hospitals could be further stressed this winter."

But, considering the many studies showing flu vaccines have a dismal success rate even when well-matched to circulating viral strains, the fact that vaccination continues to be touted as your first line of defense against influenza suggests this annual campaign is more about generating conformity for profit, opposed to actually improving and protecting public health.

Flu Vaccine Likely Raises Your Risk of Illness

The fact that flu vaccines offer negligible protection against flu is bad enough, but evidence suggests the vaccine may even make you more susceptible to the disease. For example, Canadian researchers found that annual flu vaccination appears to increase your risk of pandemic illness, and cause more serious bouts of illness.

Data collected from Canada and Hong Kong during 2009 to 2010 showed that people who received the seasonal flu vaccine in 2008 had twice the risk of getting the H1N1 “swine flu,” compared to those who had not received a flu shot.²⁹

A well-publicized ferret study³⁰ confirmed these results. Research³¹ published more than a decade ago, in 2011, also warned that the seasonal flu vaccine appears to weaken children's immune systems and increases their chances of getting sick from influenza viruses not included in the vaccine.

Some health experts claim flu vaccination will help you develop resistance against strains that are not included in the vaccine, but research has actually shown the complete opposite to be true.

When blood samples from healthy, unvaccinated children and children who had received an annual flu shot were compared, the unvaccinated group had naturally built up more antibodies across a wider variety of influenza strains compared to the vaccinated group.³² Flu vaccines are also associated with debilitating and potentially lifelong side effects such as Guillain–Barré syndrome and chronic shoulder injury related to vaccine administration (SIRVA).³³

But what about the claim that you might contract influenza from your flu shot? There are many anecdotal reports of people developing the worst bout of influenza they've ever had following a routine flu vaccination and, indeed, a Chinese study³⁴ published in 2012 appears to support such claims, finding that children had a 4.4 higher chance of contracting a viral upper respiratory infection following seasonal flu vaccine administration.

Researchers have also highlighted the influence of bias in studies looking at influenza vaccine effectiveness. As noted in one 2010 study,³⁵ “Forgoing vaccination predicted death in those who had received vaccinations in the previous five years, but it predicted survival in patients who had never before received a vaccination. We conclude that bias is inherent in studies of influenza vaccination and death among elderly patients.”

Beware: Tamiflu Can Trigger Psychosis

Should you or your child come down with the flu and your doctor or pediatrician recommends Tamiflu,⁰ you should know this antiviral drug has been shown to shorten the duration of flu symptoms by less than 17 hours^{36,37} It also does not reduce viral transmission and does not lower your risk of complications from the flu, such as pneumonia.^{38,39} Scientist have also warned that the risks far outweigh the benefits.⁴⁰

These risks include convulsions, brain infections, psychosis and other neuropsychiatric problems. Tamiflu made recent headlines after a 6-year-old girl started hallucinating and attempted to jump out a second story window.⁴¹ “I don’t think the 16 hours of symptom relief from the flu is worth the possible side effects that we went through,” the girl’s father told ABC7 News.⁴²

Indeed, a number of studies have observed that Tamiflu may cause psychiatric symptoms. Research⁴³ published in 2015 reported the case of a 22-year-old man who “complained of mood swings, suicidal feelings, auditory hallucinations, memory deterioration and insomnia” after taking the drug. Other studies⁴⁴ have found more than half of all children taking Tamiflu suffer side effects from the drug.⁴⁵

Dangerous Lies Told by the CDC

Prior to the global H1N1 scare, the U.S. government stockpiled \$1.5 billion of this basically useless antiviral – money that could have been spent in far better ways than merely enriching Roche’s company pockets. As noted in an article about Tamiflu by The Atlantic, “The only people helped by the proven-to-be-ineffective drug are its manufacturers.”⁴⁶

A 2013 Forbes article⁴⁷ also spelled out a number of flaws in the science behind Tamiflu, and how benefits were overstated. Despite all of this overwhelming evidence, the CDC to this day continues to recommend both flu vaccines and antiviral drugs like Tamiflu.^{48,49} They even continue to claim antiviral drugs “may prevent serious flu complications” – though the evidence clearly shows Tamiflu does no such thing.

The take-home message here is to do your homework, and not blindly follow public health recommendations. Also avoid falling prey to unreasonable fears. All deaths are tragic, but people die from influenza with and without flu vaccines. People also die without certain drugs, and from drugs.

Remember, optimizing your vitamin D to a level of 60 to 80 ng/mL may be one of the most effective flu prevention strategies out there. Also familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of sepsis, and urge your doctor to administer Marik's IV vitamin C protocol should you or a loved one be diagnosed with sepsis. It just might save your life.

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