

Warning: Flu Vaccine Made with Eggs

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With the upcoming winter months quickly approaching, we thought our readers would be interested to know that the influenza vaccine that many people receive during flu season contains traces of egg protein.

In a recent article in *Vegetarian Times* (November/December, 2006 issue), Neal Barnard, M.D. writes that all flu vaccines are made using eggs. Dr. Barnard explains the process. A small hole is made through the shell of a chicken egg. The influenza virus is then injected into it in order to infect the chick embryo and the surrounding fluid within the shell. A few days later the egg is opened and its contents are extracted and treated to kill the virus. In addition, a portion of the liquid is implanted into a second egg to make sure the virus is dead. The second egg is monitored for any signs of viral replication. In this way, one or two eggs are used per immunization. Approximately 100 million eggs are used annually to produce the flu vaccine.

Dr. Barnard suggests alternatives to avoid getting the flu this winter:

1. **Exercise regularly.** Those people who exercise at a moderate level have stronger immune systems. Use caution, though! Intense, sustained exercise can deplete antioxidants in the body and can actually impair your immune system.
2. **Stay warm.** Your body's ability to prevent viruses is affected by body temperature. This explains why you get a fever in response to infections. If your body remains at normal temperature (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit) you will be less likely to catch a virus or other bacterial infection.
3. **Take black elderberry extract.** A 2004 study concluded that black elderberry extract boosts immune defenses. Flu patients who were treated with black elderberry extract reported relief from symptoms four days faster than those who were not treated with the extract.
4. **Drink berry juice.** Dr. Barnard advises that cranberries and blueberries contain a compound that interferes with bacteria adhering to body tissue.
5. **Increase your Zinc intake.** Zinc inhibits cold viruses from multiplying in your body. It also shortens the duration of cold symptoms. You can increase your zinc intake by eating:

Beans

Nuts

Whole grains

Pumpkin seeds

Sunflower seeds

6. Drink ginger tea. The oils in ginger root have antioxidant power that boosts the immune system. You can make ginger tea by steeping one tablespoon graded fresh ginger in one cup hot water.
7. Take Vitamin C which has long been known to reduce cold symptoms. The recommended dose varies but may be up to 1000mg to 3000mg per day.
8. Drink plenty of water. Recommended amount is 13 8oz cups per day (3 liters) for a male; 9 8oz cups per day (2.2 liters) for a female. Remember, Krishna is the taste of water!

Stay healthy this winter!