

Avian Flu Cures??

In many diseases (including H5N1 in humans), a "cytokine storm" is triggered by the infection. Cytokines are hormones that regulate the immune system. When released at the right time in the proper amounts, cytokines can help fight infections and regulate processes through out the body. Most of the research into the H5N1 virus suggests that this virus actually overstimulates the immune system, and that the body kills itself while trying to eliminate the avian flu infection. For this aspect of the virus I have on hand Turmeric, a well documented herbal anti-inflammatory and a formula called Immucalm. Immucalm is made simply of two herbs, Astragalus and Marshmallow. Astragalus alone stimulates the immune system, but the combination calms it. Immucalm is used very successfully for allergies.

Absorption of the curcumin in Turmeric can be increased when co-administered with piperine (a compound found in various species of pepper, including the black pepper found in most kitchens). I keep whole pepper corns and will grind it fresh when needed.

The cytokines also increase production of reactive oxygen compounds (free radicals) that further the inflammation. Increasing our anti-oxidant intake now and keeping it at a high level will increase our chances of being able to fight this virus if infected. Fruits and vegetables with intense color are high in anti-oxidants, as are many herbal teas. Some of the most notable are blueberry, bilberry, chokeberry, green tea and rooibus tea.

There has been much talk about Tamiflu and the possibility that it can curb the reproduction of the H5N1 virus. Tamiflu works by inhibiting an enzyme called neuraminidase. There are natural neuramidase inhibitors found in plants: the most widely studied is a compound called 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-8-methoxyflavone, which is found in the herb Scutellaria (commonly called skullcap). Another neuaminidase inhibitor is the chemical resveratrol. In addition to inhibiting neuraminidase, resveratrol also sends a message to cells to stop manufacturing viruses. Resveratrol is a compound found in large amounts in red wine, grape seeds, and Japanese knotweed. James Duke's site lists grape leaves as the highest source of resveratrol.

There are many good anti-viral herbs to choose from to add to the above potential therapies. I will list only a few of my favorites. Garlic (fresh or oil), St. Johns Wort, Tea tree oil 9 as a steam inhaler or mixed with a carrier oil and rubbed into the lower chest and back).

There are many sites on the web that offer alternative therapy for H5N1. Here is one of the best I have seen. It has citations and numerous links.

<http://www.med-owl.com/herbal-antivirals/tiki-index.php?page=H5N1+Avian+Flu>

This list of substances to avoid when dealing with H5N1 is from the Bird Flu Survival Guide.

<http://www.bird-flu-influenza.com/releaza-tamiflu-alternatives-folk-medicines-antivirals.htm>

I have seen similar lists and reasoning from other sources.

The following substances may be best to avoid during a H5N1 pandemic:

Elderberry juice (Sambucal) - Increases production of cytokines TNF-a and IL-6. This substance is very effective against the common flu but may not be desirable for the H5N1 Bird Flu virus. Increases in these cytokines may trigger a lethal cytokine storm.

Micro Algae (Chlorella and Spirulina) - Increases production of cytokine TNF-a

Honey - Increases production of cytokines TNF-a and IL-6

Chocolate - Increases production of cytokines TNF-a and IL-6

Echinacea - Increases production of cytokines TNF-a and IL-6. Although it is often used for normal flu, research shows that it may increase the chance of cytokine storms for H5N1

Kimchi - Increases production of cytokines TNF-a and IL-6

Dairy products & Bananas - These foods increase mucous production