

THE FLU VACCINE

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.

BODY, MIND and YOU

It's flu season again, and I've been receiving countless e-mails from patients and readers regarding the flu vaccination asking whether they should get one, or if they should take some other type of natural alternative. A good place to start answering that question for yourself would be to understand what, precisely, a flu vaccine is made of.

After officials select the three strains of flu virus they think are most likely to be circulating during the next winter season (they picked the wrong ones last year, by the way), vaccine makers grow the viruses in fertilized chicken eggs — 500,000 of them per day for up to eight months. To inactivate the virus, formaldehyde (a known cancer-causing agent) is used, and aluminum is then added to promote an antibody response. Aluminum is a neurotoxin that may play a role in Alzheimer's disease.

Other additives to the flu vaccine include Triton X-100 (a detergent), Polysorbate 80, carbolic acid, eth-

ylene glycol (antifreeze), gelatin, and various antibiotics (neomycin, streptomycin, and gentamicin), all of which can cause allergic reactions in certain people.

Two-thirds of the vaccines made for the 2008–09 flu season, 100 million of them, contain full-dose thimerisal, an organomercury compound, which is 49 percent mercury by weight. It is used to disinfect the vaccine. Each one of these 100 million flu shots contain 25 micrograms of mercury — a mercury content that is 50,000 parts per billion, 250 times more than the Environmental Protection Agency's safety limit. Mercury is a known neurotoxin, which has a toxicity level 1,000 times that of lead.

There is some evidence that flu shot may cause Alzheimer's disease. This, most likely, is a result of combining mercury with aluminum and formaldehyde, which renders them much more toxic together through a synergistic effect than each would be alone.

One investigator has reported that people who received the flu vaccine

each year for three to five years had a 10-fold greater chance of developing Alzheimer's than people who did not have any flu shots. According to this study the brains of people with Alzheimer's display three pathologic hallmarks (bare with the technical terms: neurofibrillary tangles, amyloid plaques, and phosphorylation of tau protein).

Brain cells grown in test tubes develop these changes when exposed to doses of mercury similar to the amount of mercury a person gets from a flu shot.

According to the package inserts that come with the flu vaccine, three serious and acknowledged adverse reactions to the flu vaccine are joint inflammation and arthritis, anaphylactic shock (and other life-threatening allergic reactions), and Guillain-Barré syndrome (a paralytic autoimmune disease that can affect people several weeks after their flu shot).

Within the past year alone, I've had several patients develop joint inflammation or allergic reactions after a flu vaccine and one still suffers from



an arthritic condition that has yet to resolve.

So before you get your next flu shot, remember the facts, and maybe even discuss possible flu vaccine alternatives with a naturopathic physician.

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UNCRAMPING

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas

Anyone who has experienced a muscle cramp, or a dreaded charley horse, can attest to how painful life can get at a moment's notice. (I hate those charley horses!) Muscle cramps occur when muscles involuntarily contract and cannot relax.

Cramps or muscle spasms can last anywhere from a few seconds to a quarter of an hour — *ouch!* To make matters worse, these little nagging fits of pain seem to creep up out of nowhere and do their best to make sure that we yelp loud enough for anyone within the general vicinity to know we're hurting.

It is not uncommon for a cramp to recur multiple times before subsiding for good. The cramp may involve a part of a muscle, an entire muscle or several muscles that act together. The skeletal muscles most prone to cramping are the muscles in the calf, thigh and arch of the foot. These are

the most notorious cramp sites, and for good reason.

Thankfully, most cramps resolve spontaneously within a few seconds to minutes.

Strangely, it's not known exactly why muscle cramps develop. Strange because of how common these painful and nagging little issues are.

Research has shown that high-intensity exercise, insufficient stretching before exercise, exercising in the heat, significant amounts of fluids lost and muscle fatigue may all play a role in cramping. One other important factor is the imbalances in the levels of electrolytes (sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium and phosphate) in the blood.

Water, alone, may not be enough to hydrate the body or to replenish electrolytes after a high-intensity workout. You might need more. The muscles' sodium is the substance of

most concern when replacing fluids lost through exercising, so plain water won't necessarily cut it. Although, let's be honest, drinking water is rarely discouraged.

All I'm saying is that you might be better off adding a little electrolyte kick to the beverage.

You can experiment with making efforts to stay hydrated. For example, supplement your diet with bananas (for the potassium) and refuel with electrolyte drinks. These techniques don't always prevent cramping, but they are worth trying.

Oh, and one more thing that may or may not help with muscle spasms or to alleviate the pain is a light massage. For me, such massaging might not get rid of my spasm, but it does help me relax some.

If you're looking for a solid electrolyte replacement drink, try Emer'Gen-C packages. They come in



boxes of 36 prepackaged mixes, and all you have to do is add it to your water. And don't just use these after workouts; taking electrolyte replacements before bed can help with nighttime cramps too.

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