Handwashing, Masks Beat Drugs at Fighting Flu

When it comes to fighting the spread of influenza and other respiratory viruses, physical barrier measures -- such as handwashing and wearing masks, gloves and gowns -- may be more effective than drugs.

That's the conclusion of new research by experts who reviewed 51 published studies on the topic.

While many nations are stockpiling antiviral drugs to prepare for a possible future flu pandemic, there's increasing evidence that such drugs and vaccines won't be sufficient to block the spread of a major outbreak, noted a team led by Chris Del Mar of the faculty of health sciences and medicine at Bond University, Gold Coast, Australia.

On the other hand, there's clear evidence of a link between personal and environmental hygiene and infections, the researchers said. However, until now, there haven't been any comprehensive reviews of this evidence.

The studies examined by the review authors compared interventions to prevent viral animal-to-human or human-to-human transmission of respiratory viruses -- isolation, quarantine, social distancing, barriers, personal protection and hygiene -- to other kinds of interventions or to doing nothing. These studies did not include antiviral drugs or vaccines.

Handwashing and wearing masks, gloves and gowns were effective individually in preventing the spread of respiratory viruses, and were even more effective when all three were used in combination, the review authors found. Combining these measures may be more effective than antiviral drugs in fighting a pandemic, they said.

SOURCE: British Medical Journal
Welcome to WIC! WIC is a supplemental food program for Women, Infants and Children. To get the best start in life, your baby and young children need good nutritious food. WIC provides free nutritious food for women during pregnancy and breast-feeding and for children up to age five. The WIC program provides:

- Nutrition education
- One-on-one counseling about nutrition
- Coupons to buy healthy foods
- Support and help with breastfeeding
- Referrals to health care, immunizations, and other programs

To get WIC you need to have a nutritional and/or medical need, and meet the WIC income guidelines.

To learn more about the program, call the Health Department at (906) 779-7212 or (906) 265-9913.

What is a Family Planning Clinic?

A family planning clinic is a special clinic that offers services such as birth control, pregnancy tests, yearly exams for men and women, counseling about pregnancy, adoption and abortion, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) screening including HIV tests. At the health department, our expert medical staff provides services to all people, regardless of age, sexual orientation, or ability to pay.

All services are available by appointment. Evening appointments are available for students and working clients.

To make an appointment or for more information, call the health department at (906) 779-7237 or (906) 265-9913.

Pomegranates are often called “Chinese Apple”, even though they do not originate from China. They are one of the oldest fruits known. Thanksgiving coincides with the beginning of pomegranate season. This fruit is a symbol of abundance, fertility, longevity, and eternal life.

They are also:

- Powerful source of antioxidants, which fight to help prevent free radicals from doing their damage
- High in vitamin C
- Rich source of folic acid


“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

- The Dalai Lama
Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and is a major cause of disability. Almost 700,000 people die of heart disease in the United States annually. That is about 29% of all U.S. deaths. Heart disease is a term that includes several specific heart conditions.

The most common heart disease in the United States is coronary heart disease, which often appears as a heart attack.

The chance of developing coronary heart disease can be reduced by taking steps to prevent and control factors that put people at greater risk. Additionally, knowing the signs and symptoms of heart attack are crucial to the most positive outcomes after having a heart attack. People who have survived a heart attack can also work to reduce their risk of another heart attack or a stroke in the future. For more information on heart disease and stroke, visit http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP.

Heart Disease Prevention: What You Can Do

In principle, all people can take steps to lower their risk for heart disease and heart attack.

**Prevent and control high blood cholesterol**
High blood cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease. Preventing and treating high blood cholesterol includes eating a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fiber, keeping a healthy weight, and getting regular exercise. All adults should have their cholesterol levels checked once every five years. If yours is high, your doctor may prescribe medicines to help lower it. Visit http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/library/fs_cholesterol.htm for a cholesterol fact sheet.

**Prevent and control high blood pressure**
Lifestyle actions such as healthy diet, regular physical activity, not smoking, and healthy weight will help you to keep normal blood pressure levels and all adults should have their blood pressure checked on a regular basis. Blood pressure is easily checked. If your blood pressure is high, you can work with your doctor to treat it and bring it down to the normal range. A high blood pressure can usually be controlled with lifestyle changes and with medicines when needed. Visit http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/library/fs_bloodpressure.htm for a blood pressure fact sheet.

**Prevent and control diabetes**
People with diabetes have an increased risk of heart disease but can reduce their risk. Also, people can take steps to reduce their risk for diabetes in the first place, through weight loss and regular physical activity. For more information about diabetes, visit http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes.

**No tobacco**
Smoking increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. Never smoking is one of the best things a person can do to lower their risk. And, quitting smoking will also help lower a person’s risk of heart disease. A person’s risk of heart attack decreases soon after quitting. If you smoke, your doctor can suggest programs to help you quit smoking. For more information about tobacco use and quitting, visit http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco.

**Moderate alcohol use**
Excessive alcohol use increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke. People who drink should do so only in moderation and always responsibly. More information on alcohol can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol.

**Maintain a healthy weight**
Healthy weight status in adults is usually assessed by using weight and height to compute a number called the "body mass index" (BMI). BMI usually indicates the amount of body fat. An adult who has a BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese. Overweight is a BMI between 25 and 29.9. Normal weight is a BMI of 18 to 24.9. Proper diet and regular physical activity can help to maintain a healthy weight. You can compute your BMI at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/index.htm.

**Regular physical activity**
Adults should engage in moderate level physical activities for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. For more information, visit http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm.

**Diet and nutrition**
Along with healthy weight and regular physical activity, an overall healthy diet can help to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels and prevent obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. This includes eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, lowering or cutting out added salt or sodium, and eating less saturated fat and cholesterol to lower these risks. For more information, visit http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/nutrition_for_everyone/index.htm.
Breaking a sweat helps control weight gain over 20 years, so keep on exercising if you want to avoid packing on the pounds as you age. A consistently high level of physical activity from young adulthood into middle age increases the odds of maintaining a stable weight and lessens the amount of weight gained over time. People who reported at least 30 minutes of vigorous activity a day such as jogging, bicycling, or swimming were more than twice as likely to maintain a stable Body Mass Index (BMI) over 20 years. But even highly active people who gained weight, gained 14 pounds less over 20 years than those with consistently low activity.

Healthy Weight Week is a time to celebrate healthy lifestyles that last a lifetime and prevent eating and weight problems. Eat well, live actively, and feel good about yourself and others. It’s a welcome change from the dieting and bingeing that typically begin the New Year! If you would like to learn other ways to celebrate Healthy Weight Week, check out http://www.healthyweightnetwork.com/hww.htm.