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Debunking Medical Myths: Vitamin C Prevents the Common Cold

Jacfar Hassan

Wayne State University School of Medicine, hj2212@wayne.edu

Vikash Mehan

Wayne State University School of Medicine, hh5214@wayne.edu

Sadaf Hashemian

Wayne State University School of Medicine, gi6208@wayne.edu

Keinnan Hares

Wayne State University School of Medicine, gh8062@wayne.edu

Bria Elrod

Wayne State University School of Medicine, fp8046@wayne.edu

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Jacfar Hassan, Vikash Mehan, Sadaf Hashemian, Keinnan Hares, Bria Elrod, and Julia Chase

Myth or Fact?

Vitamin C Prevents the Common Cold



MYTH!

Vitamin C became a popular treatment option for the common cold in 1970 by Noble prize winner Linus Pauling when he stated it could cure and prevent the cold. While correct that vitamin C can be helpful he overall exaggerated the vitamins' effect causing the "Linus Pauling effect" in which sales of Vitamin C quadrupled. Linus went as far as to conclude mega-dose of Vitamin C could cure cancer and decrease mortality.(3)



What are the facts?

Incidence

frequency that an illness occurs in a population

Using two meta-analyses, covering 19,778 people, no significant correlation between daily Vitamin C supplementation and frequency of the common cold was found. That is, populations with daily vitamin C supplementation and populations without it had very similar **INCIDENCE** of the common cold (2) (3)

Factual Correlations with Common Cold Incidence

59%

OF SUBJECTS ACQUIRED THE COMMON COLD IN THE CONTROL GROUP BY NOT WASHING THEIR HANDS (5)

62%

DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PEDIATRIC PATIENTS HOSPITALIZED FOR RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES (2020-2021) (INCREASED MASK USE IN THIS TIME) (4)

Megadosing

Taking a dose of a vitamin or drug much greater than recommended daily intake

Taking a daily dose of greater than 1 g of vitamin C shortly after the onset of a cold didn't reduce the duration or severity of cold symptoms in healthy adult volunteers when compared with a vitamin C dose less than the minimum recommended daily intake. (1) Excess Vitamin C will simply be excreted in the urine.

Actions that you can take to Prevent the Common Cold

- Wash your hands regularly
- Wear a face mask
- Avoid touching your face
- Social distance (6)



By: Orange 29 - Julia Chase, Bria Elrod, Keinnan Hares, Sadaf Hashemian, Jacfar Hassan, Vikash Mehan

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