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Reduce Your Risk of Getting COVID-19

Watchmen Daily Journal · 17 Feb 2021 · By Franz Loren J. Tundag, Teacher 3 Lopez Jaena Elementary School, Murcia, Negros Occidental

COVID-19 can make anyone sick. According to the Government of Canada and to the studies conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the following people with certain conditions are at high risk of getting COVID-19:

First, older adults (increasing risk with each decade, especially over 60 years).

Second, people of any age with chronic medical conditions including lung disease, heart disease, hyper tension (high blood pressure), diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, dementia, and stroke.

Third, people of any age who are immune-compromised, including those: with an underlying medical condition (e.g., cancer), and taking medications that lower the immune system (e.g., chemotherapy).

And lastly, people living with obesity (BMI of 40 or higher).

CDC recommended the best way to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. First, People at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and those who live with them, should consider their level of risk before deciding to go out and ensure they are taking steps to protect themselves. Consider avoiding activities where taking protective measures may be difficult, such as activities where social distancing can't be maintained.

Another recommendation, wear masks. Masks prevent people from getting and spreading the virus, especially those who may not know they have it.

CDC recognizes that wearing masks may not be possible in every situation or for some people such as children. Some older adults with cognitive, sensory, or behavioral issues might find wearing a mask diffi cult.

Third, wash hands often. If soap and water are not readily available, such as with outdoor visits or activities, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Lastly, clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between use. Staying healthy during the pandemic is important.

When discussing viruses, we are faced with the terms vaccine and antiviral. Yes, they are both used in fighting disease, but they are not interchangeable.

According to National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), vaccines are classically administered to prevent the appearance of a medical problem, while drugs are generally administered to treat a medical problem.

In short, as stated by Jennifer Gunner, Your Dictionary, vaccines are part of preventative care and are usually given before a patient catches a virus. Once a patient becomes ill from a virus, a doctor would prescribe antiviral agents to fight the virus and stop it from infecting the patient further.

Gunner said that vaccines are typically injections or nasal sprays that contain inactive viruses. When they enter a person's body, their immune system fights the virus as if it were an active

infection. This process trains the immune system to effectively fight the virus if the person encounters it again.

She added that vaccines contain different elements depending on the virus. Some vaccines use "live" viruses for the body to fight, while others only use parts of a virus.

She further added that, for viruses that do not have an effective vaccine, antiviral agents can be a good way to protect the body.

Antiviral agents come in the form of medications or drugs. They stop the virus from replicating any further, which stops the infection before it can make the patient sicker.

Gunner concluded that taking antiviral medication after you have caught a virus can shorten the time you are sick. However, taking these prescriptions before you become infected can't prevent you from getting sick. They are only designed to stop a virus once it has infected host cells in a body.