

Toni Talks

Humanity Matters

Episode 5

Novel Coronavirus Prevention and Boosting Your Immune System

Good morning. This is Toni Julian and I'm your host of Toni Talks, Humanity Matters. This episode is a rather urgent episode as because you all know we're in the very initial stages of a worldwide pandemic. Today we're going to talk about the novel coronavirus prevention and also boosting your immune system. Now this Coronavirus or COVID-19 as it's being called, it's really becoming an increasing concern and not just a buzzword and I think that the public in the U.S. is just starting now to wrap its collective head around this. Today as I'm recording this, it's March 12, 2020 and this'll probably be live in just a couple of days and I know that we will be learning a lot more about it than we even know today and it seems that more and more events, public events, activities are being shut down. I know my daughter's school up in San Francisco has shut down for the month.

The concerts are being canceled, so we are just now watching all of this unravel and now many of us will potentially be exposed. The World Health Organization, the CDC and our president, they're all sharing their educated and not so educated, best guesses, right? I mean they are just really guesses and they can take their statistics and they can look at what's happening out in the world, which is all great. But I think they're just really right now trying to of course limit everybody's exposure. But the reality is I, really believe strongly that we need to be proactive to protect not only ourselves, but everyone around us. And the best way to do that is to number one, increase our awareness and number two, modify our actions right now instead of waiting. And I may be viewed, you know, potentially as being over reactive, but I really don't think I am.

I mean, it's here, it's now it's growing. We've seen what has happened in Italy. The entire country is shut down basically. It is now in Spain. It's obviously infiltrating all kinds of places around the world. And I think the sooner that we wrap our heads around that, whether it's in our community or not, the better. We have some cases up in the San Francisco area, of course, Santa Clara County, a couple now in Morgan Hill then in Gilroy. So I am seeing this around me and it's just really making me evaluate exactly my behaviors, where I'm going to go, what I'm going to do, how can I limit exposure. And again, it's not just for myself. I'm thinking about my husband's mother who is frail and we are at that point where she may need some modifications, with the help of his sister. They are just embarking on that right now.

And I went through that with my father when was sick. So, you know, the high-risk groups, the frail, the elderly, like we need to look out for them also. And the more we're around them, the more we are exposing them. So, not to be over-reactive, that's definitely not what I'm doing right now. But I feel like we have the power to effect some change and nip this thing in the bud because I feel like that's really what we need to do. I think if left unchecked, the numbers of people, like if the United States did nothing, it would just, it would kill off 3 million people. All right. So those are potentially the realities. But again, guesses. I just feel like we should also always be very, very proactive in all of this.

And in a couple of days, there's a concert that I decided not to attend. You know, we still have paid for our tickets, so I know that there, when we look at this social distancing from each other and events and people, there is a potential impact on the economy, which I know everybody is concerned about. I'm concerned about that as well. And I do feel like the smaller businesses, as you know, and I have a small business, could be hit the hardest. So I'm going to be looking at ways where I can give myself a little bit of extra protection and distance myself. Like I will not be going to the gym. I think the gym is just a Petri dish. So, but I'm not going to cancel my membership. It's, it's a, it's a, you know, one location, single business. So if I have the means to do that, I'm going to do that. I don't think everybody can, but if we can, like let's support each other through this as well.

And hopefully as we limit our exposure, you know, yes, I may lose some currency. There is no value in that, but I'll make that up with hopefully better health. So here we go. What can we do to protect or protect ourselves? I have spoken for years and years about being building a strong immune system and the reason that I became a nutrition and fitness expert was because I lost a best friend at pancreatic cancer about 13 years ago. I lost my Papa two years ago to multiple myeloma. And so my passion really is to help people be as strong as they can be so they can be in the very best position to stave off disease if they happen to get it or be able to fight it off. And that means cancer. That means viruses, that means COVID-19. So here are my top tips for boosting your immune system and please take just a few minutes to perhaps jot some notes down if you can.

If there are some things that maybe you're not doing, a few takeaways that you can get from this, most likely you're doing a lot already. But I think stepping it up and thinking a little bit in more detail about what we can do would be ideal for us. We're going to talk about boosting our immune system and if you are for anything.

The number one priority, I would say through all the research that I have done in nutrition and fitness is sleep. So number one is get plenty of sleep. If you're feeling drained, if you're feeling under the weather, if you're feeling sluggish, then your immune system is already compromised. It means that your body is working extra hard to keep you well.

You need to increase your sleepy time to about nine hours. And a lot of people tell me, "Oh, five hours is fine" or "I get six hours, I feel fine". Well, most people need about nine hours. If you allowed yourself to just sleep in one day, you might find that you get nine hours and you feel great. Like try it nine hours. I feel high on hours. I don't know about you, but my body personally needs it and the reality is our body only heals when it sleeps and then your brain needs time to produce the chemicals so you can handle stress and have those feelings of happiness too. So schedule some time to not set your alarm so you wake up naturally. It's really important to maintain good sleep hygiene so that means going to bed at the same time every night, waking up at the same time every morning, keeping your phone away from your bedroom. Just go shut it off, put it somewhere overnight so you can get those extra Z's. All right. You will be feeling so much better if you can get on a really consistent sleep schedule and just be consistent about it. That's like the, such an important thing.

Number two, don't touch your face. All right? We touch our face way more often than we realize we might get something at our eye or touch our forehead when we're thinking or puzzled. So we touch objects in public all the time and just think about the germs that we can pick up. So, with COVID-19 it's not just transmitted through sneezing and that kind of thing. You can touch an object that someone else has touched and be able to pick it up that way. It is less likely that that happens, but it's still a reality. So think about all the things in your daily life.

Like you go to a small restaurant, you get some lunch with the, your significant other, and you pick up a laminated menu. That menu at the restaurant, thousands of people I've touched before you, I doubt they wipe it down or disinfect it, whether it's laminated or paper. That's one potential place. Also the light switch in a restroom. I always know that after I wash my hands, I take the same paper towel. I opened the door with it. I shut off the light switch with it. And that's another way you can avoid germs. What about the stylus in the grocery store? When you go to use your credit card? And oftentimes what's great is you don't have to sign, but sometimes you do. And so, you are picking up a stylus that many, many people have touched prior to you. And that never gets cleaned either.

So that's another one. Think about the pump at the gas station, the cart at the grocery store. And then while you're at that grocery store, maybe you took out your phone where you might pull up your shopping list, right? So you've touched your phone while you're in the grocery store. Maybe you've taken your sunglasses off and thrown them in your purse or put them on your head. You've used your credit card. If you're a woman, you've possibly used your lipstick, you get into your car, you've been drinking your coffee from your travel mug, you've touched that, so you get the picture, right? So, coming back from those errands and washing her hands with hot water and soap is absolutely ideal. But then think about the other things that you've touched while you've been on your errand.

And I would take some disinfecting wipes and I would just like wipe everything down. Just give it a quick wipe. And then you are sure that you are not washing your hands. And then you go get your phone and you are re-introducing whatever germs are on that phone back into your immediate environment. Then you touch your face, you think, "Oh, I'm fine, I'm at home". And then you, you do something with your face, right? Touch your face. So that's that.

Number three, stop shaking hands. Like I know we are in this social conditioned environment where if you don't shake somebody's hand, maybe that's considered impolite, but whatever, you know, some people fist bump. Me being in the food business, I wear gloves, I do a food demos. So I am very, very aware of germs, especially as I'm sampling some of our hot protein meals and meal bars. So I'm already in that mindset. And oftentimes while I'm sampling, someone will try to shake my hand. I'll just say, "Hey, fist bump!" or "just can't shake your hand". So, we just need to get into that mode where we are conscious of exposing ourselves around other people. All right.

Number four, eat nourishing foods. So let's cut the crap out of our diet. Seriously, we need to do this anyway. So let's take this opportunity not just to fuel our body, but give it the nourishment. It needs to stay healthy and strong. We need to think of food not just as fuel. It's not just calories, but all of that food when it breaks down, they're chemical messengers and they're creating a cascade of events from creating hormones to building muscle and creating energy in the mitochondria of each cell. So if you want something crunchy and you've had a choice between tortilla chips and an Apple, choose the Apple. It's a great source of vitamin C for you.

Just be mindful about every bite you're eating and how it's affecting your body for better or worse. And when you were taking in nourishing foods. When you're eating a lot of plants in greens and fruit and whole, you are crowding out foods that have no nutritional value. It's not just calories, and sugar especially creates inflammation in your body, so if you can just stick to whole foods and crowd out the rest, you are going to be so much better off.

Number five, take care of your gut. We have about three pounds of microbes in our gut that weighs about the same as our brain roughly, and those three pounds are all microbes that are really not us! It's not part of our human makeup, but it is part of our microbiome and there are probably 10,000 different species of gut bacteria.

We are colonized by trillions of microbes. All right? That is our gut biome and the majority of our immune system is based in our gut. I've heard 70%, 80% I don't know exactly what it is. I don't know if there's an actual percentage. I'm sure that varies by person to person. But what we can do though is really support our microbiome. So, if you think about have you taken antibiotics in the last year? I saw this piece of research several years ago now where it showed a person that took antibiotics and it showed how it killed off, not just the bacteria that was causing whatever infection was going on in that person, but it killed off a lot of the good bacteria as well. And then it showed this research where they took this same group of individuals one year later and it showed how the good bacteria did not come back by itself.

And I thought, that's really interesting. So when we take antibiotics and it kills off the infectious bacteria, it's impacted our good bacteria and our good bacteria need a lot of support to come back. Right? So one thing I think we can do is take probiotics and those can come in a capsule form. You can find them; the high-quality ones are usually refrigerated at some of these specialty grocery stores. And this I will tell you as popular as taking probiotics are, is not scientifically proven. Okay. So it's just something that you can try. I take probiotics every day. I think they do help me. I have not gotten sick in years. I mean really years, especially any sort of a cold or anything. But you can see what works for you. I know some people that cannot take probiotics, it makes them not feel well.

So, if you're taking it, it's definitely something I would continue to do. There are a lot of health claims that they provide health benefits when they're consumed and contribute to the gut flora, the health of your gut flora, but do be your own advocate for that. Make your own decisions around it. I am just telling you, I do it for myself. My clients take it and I think it's a potentially really positive thing to do. The other way you can find ways to improve your gut flora instead of taking this capsule form is in fermented foods such as kombucha, kimchi, sauerkraut and Kefir yogurt. Kefir yogurt is really good. If you haven't tried it, it's kind of like yogurt, but it's fairly runny, so it's very drinkable. Anyway, think about your gut flora, helping to keep everything balanced. You know, just like lots of nutritious food, probiotics, if they suit you.

Number six, manage your stress through exercise. Even just 30 minutes a day will help you manage your stress. I know sometimes, we do get stressed, it impacts our sleep and then the sleep impacts the quality of the food we eat because we were wanting to compensate with the lack of energy by

consuming more sugar and things like that. And we ended up in this cascade of unhealthiness, right? And unhealthy habits. So even if you can just get out for 30 minutes a day, you will improve those endorphins. You'll be able to get better sleep. Your sleep will help you generate like serotonin in your brain and will help you manage your cortisol and your stress hormones. I highly, highly recommend you get exercise. It will just help you manage all those other aspects of your life to keep you healthy.

All right, number seven, remember to take your vitamins. I use a visual cue every day because I am one of these people, I just don't remember to take my vitamins. I need some form of reminder. What I do is I take one of these really small, these little chef spice bowls. It's just a clear little bowl and I place it in a part of the house where I am sure not to miss it. For me, I put it on right next to my coffee maker because I know without fail every morning, I'm going to have make myself a cup of decaf coffee. So, I will put the bowl there, which serves as a visual cue, reminding me to take my vitamins out of the cupboard and I just put them in one of those seven-day dispensers and I will load it up once a week.

And I love these dispensers because it's really obvious if you've missed a dose, if you take your Monday dose and then you go miss it on Tuesday and you look at it on Wednesday. It tells you exactly where you are. And so, with the vitamins it's great but you may also be on prescription medications and you need to monitor it way more closely than that. But this is just like my way to take vitamins so I don't forget. All right. I usually take a multivitamin and I take one for women because it has some things in it that not like extra iron that women need. And I take vitamin D because most of us, I think it's 85% of us do not get enough vitamin D from the sun.

And it's virtually impossible where I live anywhere anyway to get enough vitamin D (in the wintertime), even if I was outside and exposed. So, I do take vitamin D. I've been lab tested and I would recommend the same for you to find out exactly how deficient you are. If you are deficient in D so you'll know exactly how much you should take on a daily basis. And if you are deficient then your doctor can recommend the exact amount that you need. It is a fat soluble vitamin, so it's important to get the right dosage. I also take my probiotics and I also take collagen for good joint health. Being that I'm over 60 and you know our joints need a little extra support as well.

Vitamin C I take it is water soluble, so that means your body will use what it needs and that it should flush out the rest. Because it does flush out what you don't need, I try to take vitamin C a couple of times a day. I don't take mega doses, but I'll take like these little chewables that I can just pop whenever I need it. So I'll take maybe a couple in the morning and a couple of at night. But this way I get at least some boost for my immune system as well.

And then number eight is limit the alcohol. All right? So, this is important because the alcohol that we drink, alcohol is actually a foreign substance. Our bodies don't really know what to do with it, so it will just typically store it as fat. Um, so moderation is absolutely key. Red wine is the healthiest white wine has, I think it's something like four times the amount of sugar in it. So I think red wine, it's definitely a better option.

Plus, it has a lot of antioxidants in it. Hard alcohol is essentially poison. So I totally stay away from hard alcohol. I may have a little shot of tequila, that's my weakness. Tequila and goldfish maybe once a year,

not often. All right. Some people will use it to help them relax, fall asleep at night, and while it can help you fall asleep initially, it can also wake you up hours later. So that will disrupt your sleep habits and your circadian rhythm. And then we're undermining number one, which is get a good night's sleep! Right? Back to number one.

And now the very last one is number nine, which is drink plenty of water. And this is really critical. So, the opportunity to flush toxins, and it allows your cells to function properly. So how much do you need? That's the question. And there've been lots of information around this, but basically you take your weight, so say you're 150 pounds and you divide that by two. So that gives you 75 and that's how many ounces you need per day (at a minimum). That is equivalent to about nine and a third cups or so. Be sure to drink up!

I hope all of this has helped. I do this really just out of caring and concern. Obviously, the things that you do are really, for yourself, but I just want everybody to think about please that what you do for yourself is not selfish. You are helping not only yourself out, but you are better equipped to help everybody around you. Okay? So, like you're on an airplane, put on that oxygen mask before you help the person next to you.

Thank you for listening. Be sure to subscribe if you'd like to continue to listen in. I am sending you prayers, healthy healing, and love and hugs from me to you. All right, until next time. Bye bye.