

## **An Ounce of Prevention**

In the 14<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. half the human population of the earth was destroyed. One-quarter of the European continent, or twenty-five million people were succumbed by something they could not see, smell or touch.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, approximately 70 million Native Americans in Mexico, Central America and the Inca Empire in Peru were killed by Spanish Conquistadors. They were not killed by a sword, but by a childhood disease.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw a war that killed about 8.5 million people. However, at the end of World-War I (1918-1919), twenty million people died, not from bombs or bullets, but from the flu.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, we are fighting a sexually transmitted disease that continues to take thousands of lives every minute. These human tragedies all have one thing in common. The villain in each case previously mentioned is another life form. A life form, when examined under a powerful microscope, is more alien than anything ever dreamed of by science fiction writers.

How do we fight an enemy that we cannot see? Who prevents such a brutal attack by this invisible foe? There is a branch of science, which recruits from various fields of biology and medicine. The warriors in this war are called epidemiologists. Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and causes of disease in populations. Epidemiologists study how many people or animals have a disease, the outcome of the disease (recovery, death, disability, etc.), and the factors that influence the distribution and outcome of the disease.

Like all warriors, weapons are needed to fight the enemy. Weapons like vaccinations, antibiotics, anti-viral injections, and numerous methods to identify the enemy are used.

In any war, civilians are involved. Like the “minute-men” who fought in the revolutionary war in America, you can help prevent the antagonist from advancing. It is your responsibility to make sure that all immunizations are up-dated when needed. See your doctor and ask about your vaccinations.

Secondly, preventing the spread of disease can be as easy as washing your hands. Washing your hands properly and frequently is a proven method to prevent the spread of many communicable diseases such as hepatitis. Hepatitis, when contracted, can destroy your liver. There is no cure for hepatitis and it can be passed-on from human-to-human by touch.

Eating properly, getting enough sleep, washing your hands frequently, checking your immunizations with your doctor, all of these recommendations can help prevent the spread of diseases.

We at the Health Center will be happy to help you.



**Healthfully yours,**

**Dr. Healthberry**

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For questions or comments you can;

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