WellNews: Cold water

by Scott_LaFee

It's not the cure for the common cold. It's a catalog.

Nonetheless, some researchers at the University of Maryland say their successful decoding of the genomes of 99 strains of the common cold virus represents a big step toward eventually coming up with the proverbial cure.

By mapping the genomes, says Stephen Liggett, an asthma expert, science has revealed a list of the virus' vulnerabilities. "We are now quite certain that we see the Achilles' heel, and that a very effective treatment for the common cold is at hand."

Others aren't so sure. First, while the ordinary cold afflicts pretty much everybody at one time or another, it is generally considered to be a minor health nuisance. Pharmaceutical companies, who would have to invest millions to find an effective cold cure, don't see any obvious payoff. Few people would be willing to pay the likely price of the drug.

Second, critics doubt inventing such a drug is possible. Even with their genomes mapped, cold viruses (otherwise known as rhinoviruses) are elusive targets. There are many, many strains and they mutate easily, creating more strains.

GET ME THAT. STAT!

A new study published in the journal Circulation says roughly 200,000 American teens and preteens need medication to lower their cholesterol.

STORIES FOR THE WAITING ROOM

According to the medical profession (and Karl Shaw, author of "5 People Who Died During Sex and 100 Other Terribly Tasteless Lists"), the five most reliable methods for diagnosing death are:

1. Pouring freezing water in an ear

2. Poking an eye

3. Sticking something down the throat

4. Grinding knuckles into the sternum

5. Squeezing testicles

NUMBER CRUNCHER

A single serving of Kung Pao chicken from Panda Express (154 grams) contains 240 calories, 135 from fat. It has 15 grams of total fat or 23 percent of the recommended total fat intake for a 2,000-calorie daily diet.

It also contains 65 milligrams of cholesterol (22 percent); 540 mg of sodium (23 percent); 12 grams of total carbohydrates (4 percent); 5g of dietary fiber (20 percent); 3g of sugar and 16g of protein.

OBSERVATION

Doctors think a lot of patients are cured who have simply quit in disgust.

â€” Humorist Don Herold

MEDTRONICA

American health

health.gov

This website, operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is a basic portal to all federal health services, from lists of toll-free numbers and information centers to breaking news and special initiatives. The site is a good place to start if you're trying to find federal assistance and guidance regarding health issues.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK

Epistaxiophobia: fear of nosebleeds

CURTAIN CALLS

When the English novelist Thomas Hardy died (1840-1928), it was his wish to be buried at his birthplace â€" the village of Stinsford. Admirers, though, thought Hardy too important for such a humble interment and came up with a compromise: Most of Hardy's remains would be sent to Westminster Abbey; his heart would be buried in his hometown.

But on the morning of the heart's planned burial, Hardy's sister inadvertently left the tiny casket containing her brother's heart open on the kitchen table. It was unceremoniously eaten by the family cat.

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