

Why Doesn't Everyone Get Sick?

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By Dr. Derek Conte

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Why is it that some people get sick all the time while others don't? Far too few of us have real knowledge of or confidence in our own immune systems. Do we realize we have walked through life unaware of the countless germs we have breathed in without being harmed? Why is that? Why is it that not everyone in the same office or household or sports team gets sick? How did humanity survive the eons of countless diseases and plagues before the advent of antibiotics and vaccines?

Did germs defeat the human race and erase us from the planet? Did our immune systems play the saving role? Does a plant grow without soil? Does a germ multiply without a favorable environment? A weak immune system is very vulnerable but a healthy immune system is not.

THE MICROBIOME

Until the late 1800's, our understanding of the human body was that it was "sterile"; that "germs were bad" ... outside invaders that needed to be destroyed if we were to be healthy. In reality, each of our bodies are teeming with trillions of microorganisms separate and distinct from our own cells which number only half as many. About 1,000 different species of living microorganisms reside in us and can protect or harm. These tiny residents are called, "the Microbiome", and it is the BALANCE of those microorganisms that is important. An healthy "Microbiome" is crucial to a strong immune system. If germs are the enemy surrounding us --- and filling our bodies --- why isn't everyone sick?

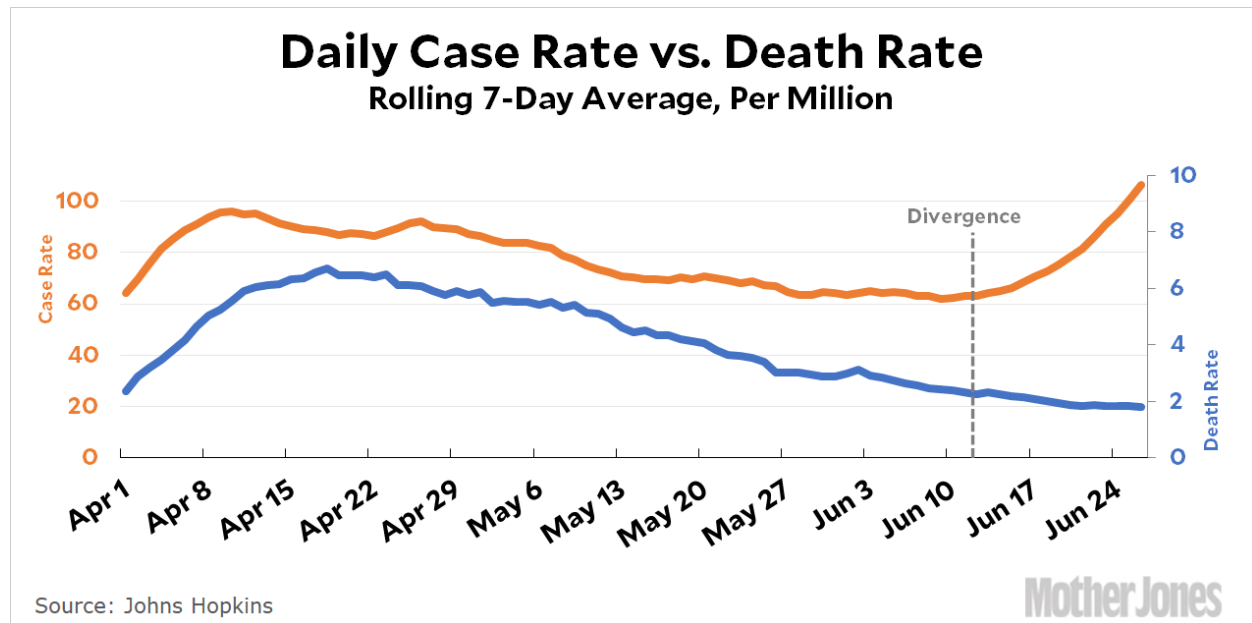
"Most members of the human [microbiome] benefit humans by providing them with traits that they would not otherwise possess... microorganisms found in the [human gut](#), for instance, obtain nutrients from ingested food in return for assisting with the breakdown of food or preventing the colonization of the gut by harmful bacteria... many microorganisms in the [microbiome] are closely related to [pathogenic](#) (disease-causing) organisms or capable of becoming pathogenic." (staph, strep, e. coli)

"Antibiotics kill or inhibit the reproduction of pathogenic bacteria and cause dramatic changes in normal human microbial communities... previously established colonies may be overtaken by colonies of different and potentially pathogenic species."

<https://www.britannica.com/science/human-microbiome>

Two French scientific greats were friends and differed on "germ" vs. "terrain" theories of disease: Physiologist, Claude Bernard said: "The constancy of the internal environment ("le milieu interieur") is the condition for a free and independent life". Chemist and microbiologist, Louis Pasteur, father of the germ theory, said: "[Claude] Bernard is right. The germ is nothing. The environment is everything". This philosophical battle still rages today.

The elephant in the room is COVID-19. It would be wrong of me not to address it. The initial two-week shut-down to “flatten the curve” has now reached five months and there is no end in sight. Though there seem to be more positive tests every day (mostly from asymptomatic people), yet the death rate has at the same time plummeted... a sign we are reaching (or have already reached) “herd Immunity” as a population, leaving fewer and fewer hosts for the virus to infect. This is evidence of the highly adaptable human immune system.



Note: This chart does not reflect “probable/earlier deaths added, June 26th-July 31st”-Our World in Data.
<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/biweekly-change-covid-deaths?tab=chart&country=~USA>

But even though the death rates have plummeted and we are in summer, when flues die, there seems to be more public apprehension, requirements for “social distancing” and masks than ever before, creating more and more human alienation from family, friends and neighbors.... extremely unhealthy in the psychological sense. Who hasn’t noticed the damage being done to our hearts, minds, relationships and subsequently our health? As social creatures we require contact - emotional and physical contact - as much as we require a proper diet and rest to be healthy.

I have said many times past: your best protection from illness is your strong, God-given immune system! (See my previous articles on “Immune System”, “Microbiome”, “Psychoneuroimmunology”).

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