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King of bitters comes to the rescue

Thursday, July 16, 2009

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Traditional remedies made from herbs such as fa talai jon or the king of bitters, ginger and garlic could help patients build their immunity against the type-A (H1N1) virus and even make a full recovery within a few days, the Public Health Ministry said yesterday.

Since Thailand is still waiting for the arrival and production of a vaccine against the virus, Suppamong Pithiporn, a pharmacist at Chaophya Abhaibhubejhr Hospital, said fa talai jon, ginger and garlic could be used to prevent infection and inflammation of cells in the meantime.

Fa talai jon in particular, she said, could prevent the virus from attaching to cells and stop the growth of the virus protein. The plant also helps boost immunity and reduce cell inflammation.

"Patient should eat fresh fa talai jon with their meals or drink it as a tea," she advised. Suppamong added that many European doctors have also started prescribing the king of bitters as medication for patients with flu-like symptoms.

Deputy director for the Institute of Thai Traditional Medicine, Anchalee Juthaphutti, said patients should start taking fa talai jon as soon as they start showing flu-like symptoms, and keep taking the herb for at least a week. The side-effect of the herb are a numbness in the limbs.

She also suggested that people start using ginger in their food and drink as it works as a virus deterrent. Fermented garlic could also help patients fight infections.

The type-A (H1N1) virus has already claimed 24 lives in Thailand and is spreading quickly, with 412 new cases confirmed yesterday, bringing total infections up to more than 4,469. Of these, only 10 cases are in critical condition.

Director general for the Department of Development of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine, Dr Nara Nakwattananukul, said 80 to 90 per cent of all flu patients recovered fully within a few days.

He also advised that patients drink lots of clean water and fruit juice, though they should not be cold, and consume soft nutritious food including eggs, vegetables and fruits. In case of low appetite, patients could start taking vitamin supplements.

Patients with severe flu-like symptoms such as high fever, vomiting, trouble breathing, diarrhoea and dehydration should seek medical care immediately, Department of Disease Control's spokesperson, Dr Kamnuan Ungchusak said. Patients usually recover if anti-viral drugs such as oseltamivir are prescribed within 48 hours after the onset of the illness, he said. Patients with low-grade fever and little or no appetite should also consult a doctor.

Patients at home should always take medication as prescribed and be intermittently wiped down with a wet towel to help relieve the fever.

Since type-A (H1N1) influenza is a virus no antibiotics are needed. Antibiotics will only be prescribed in case there is a bacterial complication and the patient must take all the medication to prevent the problem of drug resistance.

n@n H1N1, health, king of bitters, Traditional

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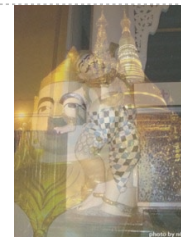
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