

JANUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

Powerful Rest And Fluids Industry Influencing Doctors' Treatment Of Colds

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WASHINGTON—A two-year investigation conducted in five major cities has exposed a widespread campaign by the formidable Rest and Fluids industry to infiltrate thousands of doctors' offices and dictate how they treat minor illnesses.

The investigation documented thousands of instances in which sick patients were repeatedly instructed, often verbatim, to "lie down and drink plenty of liquids". This treatment, recommended a staggering 4 out of 5 times on average, was in each case prescribed by a physician known to have recently enjoyed a golf vacation courtesy of Big Rest and Fluids.

The American Rest and Fluids industry first rose to prominence during the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918, when there existed only meager competition from quarantines and prayer. After gaining influence during the '20s and '30s, mainly through mob connections and a few corrupt U.S. senators, R&F was again buoyed in 1947 following the introduction of employee sick days.

What began as a small-scale racket has today grown into a multinational organization, with billions of dollars devoted each year to pushing its pro-napping, broth-focused agenda.

Representatives of Rest and Fluids have refused comment.

IN THE NEWS ...

It's been easy to find bad news over the holidays and as we begin the new year, so we thought we'd "lighten things up" with our first newsletter of 2009.

There's good news too: First the above, available in full from The Onion (http://www.theonion.com/content/news/powerful_rest_and_fluids_industry), but also the news that happiness is contagious. Published in the British Medical Journal on-line in December 2008, findings by social scientists James Fowler and Nicholas Christakis on social networks found that happiness moves through social networks. If your friends are happier, you are likely to be happier. This is probably not surprising. But Fowler and Christakis also found that if your friends' friends are happy, it will increase your happiness – and if their friends are happy, this will also affect your happiness positively as well.

The study involved 4,739 people who completed a standardized questionnaire that rated their levels of "happiness" using questions like "I felt hopeful about the future" and "I was happy". Important life events (e.g., deaths, births, marriages) were also recorded. Participants were also asked to identify family members, close friends, co-worker and neighbours. In all, the researchers were able to identify over 50,000 "ties", and observe the spread of happiness through this group.

The final analysis revealed that the happiness of an immediate social contact increased and individuals' odds of becoming happy by 15%. If an immediate contacts' immediate contact was happy (e.g., the spouse of a friend), an individuals' likelihood of becoming happy was increased by 10%. Happiness by a third degree contact increased an individuals' chances of becoming happy by 6%. Beyond three degrees there seemed not be an effect.

HEALTH TIP

In the spirit of R&F, this months' health tip reflects our commitment to the basics of healthy living. As we have written in this column previously, the "basics" will get 80% of people, 80% of the way to good health. For 2009, consider resolving to make four basics of healthy living a part of your lifestyle.

Eat regularly, and have a balanced diet. Eat every three to four hours, include some protein at each of your main meals, and include seven or more servings of vegetables and fruit daily.

Get some exercise. You don't need to join a gym, but do something active, that you enjoy, three to five times weekly, for about an hour each time.

Sleep. You need seven to nine hours nightly.

Manage your stress levels. Physical or breathing exercises, or practicing "mindfulness" are effective for this.

We're at your disposal if you need guidance instituting these behaviours into your lifestyle.