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Cold Sufferer Tries the Pauling Way

Reviewed By
Don Noren

"VITAMIN C AND THE COMMON COLD," by Linus Pauling (Freeman, 122 pages, \$1.95).

On Sunday, Dec. 13, I awoke with a scratchy throat and the first stages on head congestion. The next morning, while suffering all the traditional discomforts of an ordinary head cold, I consulted a copy of Linus Pauling's book, "Vitamin C and

the Common Cold."

On Monday I took eight 500 mg tablets of ascorbic acid (vitamin C). The following day I repeated the dosage. By Wednesday my cold had totally disappeared. Previously, a normal cold for me had meant at least a week of discomfort.

This, of course, is merely one person's reaction to the procedures recommended by Pauling. He would consider my dosage extremely moderate. But it



Linus Pauling.

does, perhaps, provide some indication of the tremendous enthusiasm and controversy generated by the two-time Nobel Prize winner's latest book. It may be less of a book than a kind of super-pamphlet. There are sections that appear somewhat extraneous in a discussion of colds, but they nevertheless make interesting reading.

Why has this particular volume generated so much public

reaction? The literature is replete with previous studies on vitamin C and its potential as a cold cure. It is this literature, coupled with the experiences of Pauling and his wife in using ascorbic acid as a preventative

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and cure, that form the body of the book.

Pauling's celebrity status attracted a good amount of reader recognition. In addition, he was astute enough to develop previous findings more cogently than the original investigators themselves were able to do. He assembled existing literature that supported his viewpoint on vitamin C, and has presented it in a manner easily comprehensible to the layman.

At the same time, he points to the case of a physician who submitted a report on ascorbic acid treatment to 11 professional journals without acceptance. One editor told him it would be harmful to print the ascorbic acid data because medical journals depend heavily on the advertising of cold remedy manufacturers.

There is much additional work to be done on the ascorbic acid controversy, but Pauling has correctly declined to take part in it because he already has a viewpoint. If I had to make a judgment at this time, I'd guess that in the course of a wide statistical sample, vitamin C would prove beneficial as a cold fighter -- even if it were not effective in some individual cases.