



hand hygiene

You Don't Want COVID-19 Following in My Footsteps

Social distancing? Check. Face masks? Check. Quarantine? Check. Good personal hygiene? Check. Use of disinfectants? Check.

I taught you these lessons, don't forget that. These are the terms that nearly everybody in the world uses nowadays because they're some of the ways they're trying to protect themselves against COVID-19. And just like with me back in the day, there's no vaccine yet for COVID-19.

Here's what you don't want future historians to write about COVID-19. You definitely don't want them to write that it killed as many people as I did. I have been described as the most underreported event of the 20th century. But then I followed on the heels of World War I and in terms of the senseless killing of human beings, that was a tough act to follow.

The people most vulnerable to COVID-19 are older adults and anybody with comorbidities. The people most vulnerable to me were healthy adults ages 15 to 34.

I'm caused by an H1N1 virus that originated in the genes of birds. Hemagglutinin (HA) is the

surface protein that allows me to enter and infect a healthy cell. I broke a lot of hearts.

Nobody even today is quite sure where I first originated, even though people thought they knew back then when I ran amok. Then they called me the...well, don't want to give the game away too early.

I infected about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population then. I killed about 50 million (in comparison, about 20 million were killed in World War I). I killed about 675,000 people in the United States.

I killed and I killed and I killed and then...I disappeared. They called me the "lost" virus. But then one very determined scientist named Johan Hultin did track me down in a small ocean-side village in Alaska called Brevig Mission. He first visited the site in 1951. He returned 47 years later, in 1997 and dug up "Lucy," an Inuit woman who I'd killed and whose body was perfectly preserved in the Alaskan permafrost.

They got me!

But who am I? [CT]

The 1918 H1N1 flu pandemic (aka the Spanish flu)