

Haircuts and Hosiery: Do Your Bit to Fight the Delta Variant

(Note that what follows is entirely satire, including the quotes from a CDC spokesman, which are invented.)

Unnoticed by some in the present upheavals caused by the delta variant of COVID-19 was a quiet announcement from the Center for Disease Control linking the virus and human hair.

“Numerous tests have revealed that the delta virus nests in hair close to the scalp,” said CDC spokesman Jonathan Swift. “Apparently, the warmth and shadows there help prolong its life. This is unfortunate, because people touch their hair frequently, and then their faces, thus increasing their chances of falling prey to this deadly disease.”

Swift then made a number of modest proposals that can help Americans protect themselves. “Keep wearing masks and social distancing,” he said. “But we also now recommend you wash your hair thoroughly at least twice a day. Men might consider shaving their heads or getting crew cuts.”

He paused, then said: “We’ve also found that hairnets such as those worn by food service personnel can help keep the virus away from hair. Because of demand, we expect an immediate shortage of hairnets, but further experimentation demonstrated that fine-knit nylons, pantyhose, and tights could also greatly reduce the chances of the virus making its way into the hair. We therefore recommend that men, women, and children purchase a pair of nylon stockings and cover their hair with it both in public and at home. Be sure to wash this head covering daily.”

In the wake of this announcement, both big box stores like Walmart and women's apparel shops reported a run on hose. "We can't keep it in stock," said Trudi Dinger, owner of a local lingerie store. "L'eggs, Hanes, Sheertex: none of our suppliers can't keep up with demand."

With most hosiery manufactured in countries like China, some Americans worry that politics may intrude and interrupt the supply to the United States. Simone Shear, a spokesperson for the Hanes corporation, which advertises some of its products with USA logos, but which uses these countries to make its clothing, issued a statement reassuring Americans that the company would do all in its power to fill the stores with hose again.

When we visited our local grocery store, we asked Max Quirky what he thought of this latest recommendation. He readjusted the black tights he was wearing around his head and said, "Look around this store. Half the customers refuse to wear hose on their heads. What's wrong with these people? Don't they realize they could kill themselves or a relative? What about Grandma? Doesn't her life count?"

A woman reluctant to identify herself was wearing three pair of hose, not just on her head but pulled down over her two facemasks. "Precaution is key," she said, though her protective devices made it difficult to understand her. "We have to follow the science. We need a mandate forcing people into hose."

Gathered outside the grocery store was a small band of protesters, mostly women with children, maskless, hoseless, and holding a variety of homemade signs, including "They're Stealing Your Freedom," "Hose Doesn't Work," and "What About the Constitution?"

As we watched, three patrol cars arrived, and six policemen, all wearing the requisite head hose, ordered the protestors to

disperse. When one of the women, a twenty-something with two toddlers in tow, refused to leave, she was arrested and cuffed, and presumably driven to the police station. Another woman, who identified herself as the arrested female's sister, took the children to her car and drove away.

All that remained was a placard on the sidewalk: "Stop the Insanity!"

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