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# Medication & *Wellness focus*

## Healthier Cooking Without Sacrificing Flavor

There is no reason to cook bland, unexciting food in the name of healthy eating. Use some of these techniques offered by the American Heart Association to avoid boring food.

- Trim fat from meat before cooking, and look for leaner cuts labeled “select” or “choice.” Avoid “prime” cuts, as they contain more fat.
- For red meat and pork, choose “round” or “loin” cuts that are lean. For poultry, opt for skinless white meat instead of dark meat.
- If a recipe calls for eggs, substitute two egg whites for one whole egg. This decreases the amount of cholesterol and fat you will be eating.
- Use low-fat or fat-free cheese, milk, or yogurt in your favorite recipes.
- Choose salad dressings and marinades with little to no fat. Creamy dressings tend to have more “bad” fats. Vinaigrettes are often a good choice for lower fat and lower sodium.
- Read nutrition labels. Watch out for hidden trans-fat, saturated fat, sodium, and sugars.
- Limit the amount of extra salt you add when cooking and look for lower sodium ingredients. Look for “low-sodium” and “no salt added” canned ingredients. Add herbs and spices to “rev up” the flavor.
- Eat a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products. The more colors on your plate, the better the meal!
- Vegetables lose some of their nutrients when overcooked. Steam or stir-fry to preserve nutrients.



## Sufficient Dietary Fiber May Decrease Lifetime Risk for Heart Disease



New research suggests that middle-aged and young adults who consume high amounts of dietary fiber are less likely to develop heart disease during the course of their lives. These findings support older research that associated high-fiber diets with lower rates of high blood pressure, obesity, and high cholesterol. In study participants aged 20 to 59 years old, those who consumed the most fiber had significantly lower risk for cardiovascular disease than those with the least intake of fiber.

## Generic Lipitor® Will Reach the Market Soon



Lipitor® users will see lower copayments when the generic version becomes available. The question is when will the generic version of Lipitor® be available. It should not be later than November 2011, but could be as early as June 2011.

The U.S. generic manufacturer, Mylan, Inc, has sued the FDA to allow for a June introduction of generic Lipitor®. Mylan claims the generic manufacturer who received FDA-approval for a November 2011 release of generic Lipitor®, Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd, should have their application revoked because of FDA cited manufacturing deficiencies and claims of falsified data and test results in their generic application.

Lipitor® is the world's top selling drug. Over \$14 billion is spent on Lipitor® each year. Generic Lipitor® will save consumers, employers, governmental units (taxpayers) and others who pay for drug benefits billions of dollars each year.

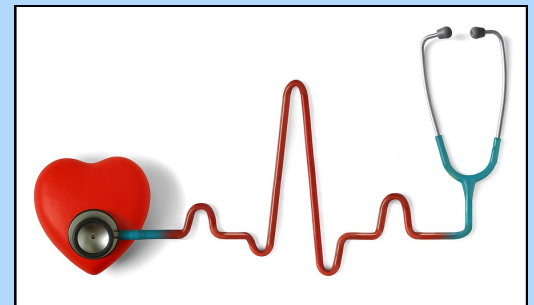
## Erectile Dysfunction and Heart Disease

Erectile dysfunction can be stressful, but it is not life threatening. However, it can be a warning sign of a larger problem. The factors causing erectile dysfunction, difficulty maintaining an erection sufficient for sexual intercourse, are some of the same ones that contribute to heart disease. Understanding the link between the two may help you recognize the early signs of heart disease and get the treatment you need.

Atherosclerosis, also called hardening or clogging of the arteries, is the buildup of plaque in arteries in different parts of the body. The arteries narrow and harden, which limits blood flow. Atherosclerosis may cause erectile dysfunction before other heart problems arise. Atherosclerosis increases the risk of heart attack, aneurysm, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease.

These factors further increase the likelihood that erectile dysfunction could be a sign of underlying heart disease:

- **Diabetes:** Men with diabetes are at a very high risk of problems caused by restricted blood flow, including erectile dysfunction and heart disease.
- **Younger age:** The younger a man is, the more likely his erectile dysfunction is a sign of heart disease. Men under age 50 are at the highest risk. Erectile dysfunction is much less likely to be a sign of heart disease in men over 70.
- **Increased weight:** Higher weight increases the likelihood of atherosclerosis and other determinants of heart disease and erectile dysfunction.
- **High cholesterol:** A high level of LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol) can lead to atherosclerosis.
- **Smoking:** Smoking increases the risk of atherosclerosis and erectile dysfunction.
- **High blood pressure:** Over time, high blood pressure damages the lining of blood vessels and accelerates atherosclerosis and erectile dysfunction.
- **Family history:** Having siblings or parents who are diagnosed with heart disease at a young age increases the chance that erectile dysfunction is a warning sign of heart disease.



Treatment for erectile dysfunction caused by heart disease involves more than treating erectile dysfunction alone. Simple lifestyle changes like exercising, modifying diet, and losing weight may be enough to keep the heart healthy and improve the ability to have an erection. Further tests and treatments may be necessary if more serious signs and symptoms of heart disease are present.

## Long Term Acid-Reducer Use Lowers Magnesium

The class of stomach acid reducers called “proton pump inhibitors” or “PPIs”, which includes Nexium®, Prilosec® and Prevacid®, have been linked to a variety of health problems when used daily for long periods of time. Chronic use of these drugs has been associated with increased risk of fractures, pneumonia and intestinal infection in some users.

The FDA now warns that long-term PPI therapy (generally one year or longer) has been associated with abnormally low magnesium levels (hypomagnesemia) in the blood. Symptoms may include irregularities in heart rhythm, muscle spasms, tremors and seizures. Risk can be increased when the patient is also on one or more other drugs that lower magnesium blood levels, such as the heart drug, digoxin, and many commonly used diuretics (water pills).

The normal magnesium blood level is 1.5 to 2.4 mEq/L. The FDA recommends that serum magnesium levels be checked before starting long-term use of a PPI and then periodically thereafter. If one is receiving a PPI and one or more other magnesium-lowering drugs (such as digoxin or a diuretic) periodic monitoring of blood magnesium levels is essential.



## Ibuprofen Use Appears to Reduce Risk of Parkinson's Disease



According to a large 6-year study published in *Neurology*, regular use of ibuprofen (used two or more times per week) appears to reduce the risk of developing Parkinson's disease by 38%. Aspirin and acetaminophen (Tylenol®) did not produce the same effect. Other studies have produced similar findings.

The authors stopped short of recommending ibuprofen therapy for individuals with a family history of Parkinson's disease. Over 1 million Americans have Parkinson's disease. The remaining question is whether the benefits of regular, long-term

ibuprofen use exceed the risks, and, if so, what should be the ibuprofen dose and frequency of use in decreasing the risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

## Safety Tips for Spring Cleaning

Cleaning your home is always a nice way to kick off spring, but don't forget to stay safe! Consider the following safety tips:

- Do not let children play near buckets containing water or cleaning agents.
- Use your legs (not back) when lifting large, heavy items to avoid back injury.
- Preventing falls:
  - Keep stairs and floor clear of clutter. Store toys, cords, or other tripping hazards out of the way.
  - Never carry a load over which you cannot see.
  - If using the stairs, keep one hand free to grab the railing.
  - Be careful when using ladders to reach high places. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Chemical safety:
  - Wear protective masks and gloves when working with harsh or toxic chemicals.
  - Never mix cleaning products together.
  - Store dangerous or poisonous chemicals out of reach of any children or pets.

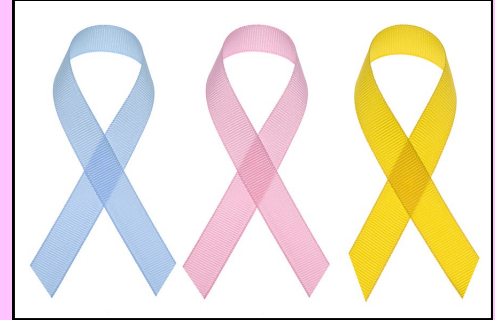


## Most Common Cancers

People over 65 account for 60% of newly diagnosed cancers and 70% of all cancer deaths. Cancer is 10 times more common in people over 65 than in people under 65, while the death rate is 16 times greater in people over 65. More than 70% of cancer-related deaths in people over 65 are due to cancers of the prostate, bladder, colon, uterus, pancreas, stomach, rectum and lung.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that the 10 most common cancers in adults (over 19 years of age) are as follows:

1. Prostate: 157 cases per 100,000 people
2. Female Breast: 120 cases per 100,000 people
3. Lung and Bronchus: 66 cases per 100,000 people
4. Colon and Rectum: 46 cases per 100,000 people
5. Uterus: 24 cases per 100,000 people
6. Urinary Bladder: 21 cases per 100,000 people
7. Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma: 19 cases per 100,000 people
8. Melanoma of the Skin: 19 cases per 100,000 people
9. Kidney: 15 cases per 100,000 people
10. Ovary: 12 cases per 100,000 people



## New Lupus Drug

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune, inflammatory disorder that may affect many body systems, including the skin, joints, kidneys, heart, lungs, blood cells, and brain. It is most common in women and African Americans. Although it may occur at any age, it appears most often in people between the age of 10 and 50. Anywhere from 300,000 to 1.5 million Americans currently suffer from 1 of the 4 forms of lupus. Plaquenil® and corticosteroids (or “steroids” such as prednisone) were the last lupus medications to be approved, and that was in the 1950s. A new lupus medication, Benlysta®, was recently approved to treat active systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). It is a drug designed to target a protein that may reduce the number of abnormal B cells believed to be the main factor causing painful symptoms. Benlysta®, used in conjunction with existing therapies, is an excellent new treatment option. However, it will cost \$500 to \$3,500 per month (based on your dose). Talk to your doctor about this new drug if you have systemic lupus erythematosus. (SLE).

## Screening for Cancer in Adults Over 40 Years of Age

Getting screened for certain types of cancer may help you detect cancer before symptoms occur. This could result in early treatment and better outcomes. Certain screening tests are recommended, while others do not justify widespread use. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following concerning cancer screening:

- **Breast Cancer:** Women over 40 should have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years.
- **Cervical Cancer:** A Pap smear test every 1 to 3 years is recommended in women under 65 years of age. Women older than 65 with normal Pap test results for several years or women who had their cervix removed may talk with their doctor about no longer undergoing Pap tests.
- **Colorectal Cancer:** Starting at the age of 50, you need to be screened for colorectal cancer. Talk with your doctor about which method of screening is right for you.

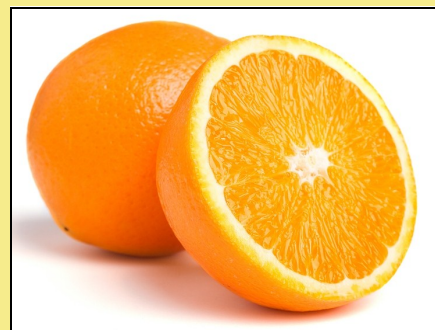


The CDC notes that screening for lung, ovarian, prostate, and skin cancer has not been shown to reduce the risk of death from these cancers. However, you can talk with your doctor about the risks and benefits of screening for these cancers given your medical history.

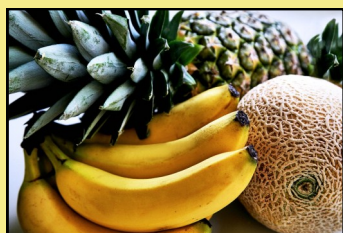


## Benefits of Increased Vitamin Intake

The human body thrives on natural substances, such as vitamins, for proper nutrition and growth. There are 13 vitamins with specific purposes to meet the body's needs. Eating foods rich in vitamins can improve your overall health and wellness. Studies have shown that consuming up to 8 servings of fruits and vegetables daily, as compared with 3 portions or less, can decrease your risk for developing heart disease by nearly 22%. It has been suggested that the antioxidant effects in vitamins may help reduce plaque buildup in arteries; however, forgoing fruits and vegetables and simply consuming an antioxidant vitamin supplement will not produce the same health results as incorporating fruits and vegetables into your diet. Other components of fruits and vegetables are thought to have an additional protective effect on the heart. Summer is the perfect time to increase your vitamin intake, as many vitamin containing fruits and vegetables are now in season. Consider the benefits of the following vitamins and their food source.



Vitamin	Benefits	Common food sources
Vitamin A	Healthy vision, skin, teeth, and bones	Organ Meats, Sweet Potatoes, Carrots, Spinach, Turnips, Eggs, Squash
Vitamin C	Wound healing, antioxidant properties, healthy teeth and gums	Oranges, Grapefruit, Tomatoes, Red and Green Peppers, Strawberries, Pineapple, Brussel Sprouts, Broccoli
Vitamin D	Strong bones	Fortified Milk and Cereals, Fish Oil
Vitamin E	Antioxidant properties, cellular protection, red blood cell production	Almonds, Sunflower Seeds, Peanuts, Peanut Butter, Spinach, Avocado
Vitamin K	Blood clotting, strong bones	Spinach, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, Broccoli
Vitamin B1 (thiamine)	Transforms carbohydrates into energy, healthy nervous system	Liver, Peanuts, Fortified Cereals
Vitamin B2 (riboflavin)	Red blood cell production	Liver, Eggs, Beans, Cheese
Vitamin B3 (niacin)	Healthy skin and nerves, cholesterol lowering effects	Liver, Peanuts, Fish, Poultry, Lean Red Meats
Vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid)	Red blood cell production, carbohydrate and fat metabolism	Beef, Milk, Eggs, Peanuts, Beans, Broccoli
Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine)	Assists with use of proteins and fats, nervous system protection	Liver, Egg Yolk, Bananas, Carrots, Whole Grains
Vitamin B7 (biotin)	Cell growth, protein and carbohydrate metabolism	Liver, Egg Yolk, Beans, Milk, Nuts
Vitamin B9 (folate or folic acid)	Cellular production, prevention of birth defects	Oranges, Fortified Cereals, Beans, Liver
Vitamin B12 (cobalamin)	Red blood cell production, nervous system protection	Fish, Soy, Poultry, Milk, Eggs, Liver, Cereals



For optimal health, make sure you consume at least 5 to 8 servings of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. Try to incorporate fruits and vegetables into each meal of the day. They also make for tasty and nutritious between meal snacks. It is also important to eat vegetables from each subgroup. Subgroups are based on nutrient content and include dark green vegetables (spinach, broccoli), orange vegetables (carrots, squash), dry beans and peas, starchy vegetables (corn), and other vegetables (brussel sprouts, cauliflower).

## Prescription Drug Prices are Rising Rapidly

In 2010, the cost of the 130 top selling drugs in the U.S. rose 6.9%, the largest annual increase of the decade and far beyond the nation's inflation rate. Those who provide drug benefits are calling for pricing restraint to no avail. Individual commonly prescribed drugs had price increases far beyond the average in 2010 (see chart below).

Drug	Use	Percent (%) Price Change in 2010	Estimated Cost per Rx*
Benicar®	High blood pressure	29.3%	\$70 - \$125
Gleevec®	Leukemia (chronic myeloid)	20.9%	\$5,800 - \$11,600
Concerta®	ADD/ADHD	19.7%	\$200 - \$225
Plavix®	Prevention of heart attack/stroke	13.2%	\$200 - \$225
Lipitor®	High cholesterol	12.4%	\$120 - \$175

\*Cost per prescription varies based on the dose used and the condition being treated

In the first 2 months of 2011, 65 of the 130 top selling drugs had price increases averaging 8.6%. Drug prices increased an average of \$58.96 per prescription from 2002 to 2009.

Because of this escalation in prescription drug costs, deductibles and patient copayments are expected to increase. The federal government pays for nearly half of the \$300 billion spent per year on prescription drugs with taxpayer dollars. Consumers are beyond "sticker shock".

## FDA Orders Unapproved Cold Drugs Off Market



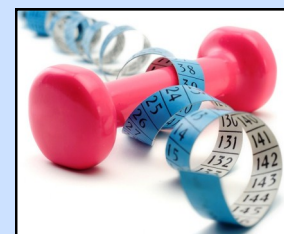
Over 500 prescription drugs used to treat coughs, colds and allergies have been removed from the market at the request of the FDA. These drugs contained ingredients that were never evaluated by the FDA for effectiveness or safety, thus never approved by the FDA for use.

Twenty-seven different ingredients were involved. Use in children was a particular concern of the FDA. In one test involving extended-release drugs that were supposed to release their ingredients over 8 to 12 hours, 85% of the active ingredients in one formulation were released in only 30 minutes. Another extended-release product only released 25% of its active ingredient after 12 hours.

American society is better off without these drugs. Over-the-counter cold products are used much more frequently than the prescription products withdrawn from the market. No over-the-counter (OTC) products were removed from the market.

## Avoid Pregnancy Hormone as Diet Aid

Some dieters are using the pregnancy hormone, human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), at a cost of \$1,000 per month or more to lose weight. They combine daily injections of the hormone with a near starvation diet of less than 500 calories per day. Claims that women can lose a pound per day without feeling hungry may sound enticing, but this diet is not safe or effective. Adverse effects including blood clots in the lung, depression, headache and breast tenderness have been reported. Injecting hCG to increase weight loss is no better than injecting saline for the same purpose. Restricting calories drastically can produce large amounts of weight loss without the hCG injections. A normal diet consists of around 2,000 calories per day. Restricting yourself to less than 500 calories daily is essentially the same as starving yourself. Caloric restriction would best be limited to a balanced diet high in fruits and vegetables and low in fat containing 1200 to 1500 calories per day.



## Warning Signs of Migraine

Do you suffer from migraines? If you do, you may be able to detect signs that can alert you that a migraine may be coming. Approximately 20% (1 out of every 5) of migraine sufferers show signs of a migraine before the headache occurs. An “aura” or warning may be experienced from 10 to 30 minutes before a migraine occurs. The National Headache Society classifies auras the following symptoms.....

- Flashing lights.
- Bright lights around objects or in your peripheral vision.
- Seeing lights in a zigzag pattern.
- Blind spots in your vision.
- Distorted vision.
- Experiencing a “pins or needles” feeling in one arm or leg.
- Muscle weakness.
- Abnormalities in speech.
- Dizziness or vertigo.
- Numbness of the face, tongue, or extremities.



Anyone who suffers from migraines, whether they experience warning symptoms or not, may be able to identify certain “triggers” which may cause a migraine headache. Some “triggers” for migraines include.....



- Bright light or loud noises.
- Lack of sleep or food.
- Hormonal changes due to the menstrual cycle.
- Stress or anxiety.
- Allergic reactions.
- Changes in the weather.
- Alcohol, chocolate, nicotine, or caffeine.
- Certain foods such as red wine, smoked fish, chicken livers, aged cheese, nuts, or pickled foods.
- Certain additives or seasonings in food such as MSG (monosodium glutamate).
- Odors, colognes, or perfumes.
- Pesticides.

If you are unsure of what triggers your migraine, write down when your headaches occur in a daily diary or pocket calendar and also what you think may have caused your migraine attack. This information can help you and your doctor identify the possible cause(s) of your migraines. If one or more of your migraine “triggers” can be determined, you may be able to avoid certain activities, dietary factors or situations, thus reducing the number of migraines you may suffer in the future.

## Potassium-Rich Foods May Cut Stroke and Heart Disease Risk

A recent study found that a diet rich in foods containing potassium can reduce one's risk for stroke by 21% and may also lower your risk of heart disease. Foods that are good sources of potassium include bananas, apricots, raisins, potatoes, tomatoes, lima beans, brussel sprouts and other fruits and vegetables, fish, poultry and dairy products.



Researchers found that people who consumed 1.64 grams (1,640 mg) of potassium or more per day benefited from the reduced risk of stroke and heart disease. Five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables will typically provide the amount of potassium needed to get these effects. A higher potassium intake is safe for most people; however, people with kidney failure or who are taking drugs that affect potassium (such as diuretics or certain blood pressure drugs), should consult their physician.



## Many Fans Drunk When Leaving Sports Events

Beware sports fans who attend live sporting events. A recent study found that 40% of people attending professional baseball or football games had a positive blood alcohol level and 8% of all attendees were legally drunk when they left the stadium. Researchers consider these figures to be conservative because many people refused the invitation to take a breathalyzer test.

Among other findings were the following:

- 58% of people with a positive blood alcohol level were male.
- 55% of those with a positive blood alcohol level were between 21 and 35 years of age.
- Nearly 1 in 4 people who tailgated before the games reported drinking 5 or more alcoholic beverages before the game started.
- People who tailgated were 14 times more likely to leave the game legally intoxicated than those who did not tailgate.



Findings raise serious safety concerns for those drinking and for bystanders, both in the stadium and while driving from the stadium. Questions of training for those who sell alcohol at sports events, stepped-up police patrols around stadiums after games, and children's safety were among many questions raised by non-drinkers who attend live sporting events.

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