

The Natural Pharmacy Newsletter

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In The News

Aid for Allergies

It's the time of year again that allergies begin to rear their ugly head and this year the allergens seem to be more prominent. Although not much help for itchy and watery eyes, nasal saline irrigations provide great relief to many individuals with a runny or stuffed up nose. Better yet, the treatment has virtually no side effects. Granted, it is not a pleasant experience to squirt salt water up your nose, but once past the initial feeling it will help to leave you breathing clearer.



Options for delivery of saline to the nostril are based on personal preference. A squirt bottle, nasal pot, or irrigation bulb are all viable options. Nasal saline or pre-mixed packets can be purchased, or one can make their own solution right on the stove top. Any way you chose to go, a one to two time daily nasal saline irrigation is a great alternative or addition to help fight allergies.

Reference: Harvey R, Hannan SA, Badia L, Scadding G. Nasal saline irrigations for the symptoms of chronic rhinosinusitis. The Cochrane Library; 2009: 1.

Sugar's Effects on Cholesterol

Sugar has a long association with effects on one's health including obesity and diabetes, but a new study also links sugar to increases in one's cholesterol. The study found that the people who added the most sugar to their diets had lower HDL (good cholesterol) and higher triglyceride levels. Higher cholesterol is linked to a higher risk of heart disease. To help decrease your risk of heart disease, limit sugar intake and avoid adding extra sugar to foods.

Reference: Welsh JA, Sharma A, Abramson JL, Vaccarino V, Gillespie C, Vox MB. Caloric sweetener consumption and dyslipidemia among US adults. JAMA. 2010;303(15): 1490-1497.

Supplements for Weight Loss

Everybody is looking for that magic pill to peel away the pounds, but do not get caught up in all those gimmicks that claim to work. While diet and exercise remain the best way to shed some pounds, there are a few products that are available that may be able to help. Conjugated Linoleic Acid, taken at 3.2 grams/day has been shown to help people decrease body fat and increase muscle at the same time. The main side effects



are diarrhea and nausea, but it is generally well tolerated. Increasing fiber and even taking a fiber supplement can help fill you up faster and decrease hunger between meals, leading to less overall calorie intake. Adding fiber to your diet needs to be done slowly, though, in order to not cause constipation. Green tea extract may also help, but be weary of caffeine content. Be sure to clear any new supplements with a health care professional before beginning to take them.

Reference: Parker H. Proven Weight Loss Supplements: Which weight loss supplements really work? WebMD online.

Lentz TL and WR Hamilton, "Supplemental products used for weight loss," Journal of the American Pharmacists Association, Jan-Feb 2004; 44(1): 59-67.

Blankson H, et al, "Conjugated linoleic acid reduces body fat mass in overweight and obese humans," Nutrition, 2000; 130:2943-2948.

Extra Benefits of Hormone Replacement

Many women are using hormone replacement to help with the symptoms of menopause, but a new study finds added benefit. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is now being linked to a decrease in colon cancer in women. The length of use has a role in the amount of decreased risk. For example, if women used HRT for less than 4 years the risk was cut by ¼; however, women using HRT for more than 15 years decreased their risk by 2/3. Effects on colon cancer after stopping HRT have not been studied yet, so be sure to continue your routine screenings during and after stopping HRT.

Reference: Long MD, Martin CH, Galanko JA, Sandler RS. Hormone replacement therapy, oral contraceptive use, and distal large bowel cancer: a population-base case-control study. AM J GASTROENTEROL [abstract].

Fish Oil Supplements in Children?

As you may have noticed, Omega-3-fatty acids are being added to many more products these days. For example, some infant formulas have begun to add them to their recipe. So what is the benefit? Should your children be getting extra omega-3-fatty acids and is there a preferred form?

Omega-3 fatty acids have been studied and have some effect on behavioral and psychiatric disorders. ADHD has been a main target of study. Although efficacy varies based on the child and the quantity of fatty fish they eat, it is defiantly an option to consider before starting or increasing doses of stimulant medications. Other benefits have been seen in helping to control asthma in children and in neurodevelopment in infants.

Ideally, your child would receive all the omega-3 fatty acids they need from fatty fish products. This would mean they should be eating 2 servings of 3 ounces a piece during a week time frame. For most people this probably is not realistic; this is why many parents turn to supplements for their children. The recommended form for supplementation is as fish oil, but doses for supplementation look at DHA/EPA quantity and vary based on age.

Reference: Cupp M et al. Omega-3 Fatty Acid Supplementation in Pediatrics. Pharmacist's Letter April 2010; vol 26.

Sunburn Relief

Over-the-counter products to help with sun burn with ingredients of benzocaine or lidocaine may cause more problems than once thought. When using these medications it is important to follow instructions on the package; do not use them more frequently than listed. Also, they should not be applied to open or blistered skin. Instead try using Aloe Vera cream or gel to help with the pain.

Reference: Tanzi MG. OTC topical anesthetics: handle with care. Pharmacy Today. April 2010; 16 (4) 17.

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