

## DC Online

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### Vaccination Recommendation Withdrawn

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, a U.S. federal health panel, recently voted unanimously to withdraw its recommendation that infants be given a rotavirus vaccine. Previously, they had recommended that it should be administered to infants at 2, 4, and 6 months of age. But after it was in general use for about a year, it became apparent that it was causing intestinal obstructions. The rate of bowel intussusception increased in these infants eight-fold. Research done on the vaccine prior to its approval by the FDA reported no significant increase in this particular side effect.<sup>1</sup>

1. Reuters, October 22, 1999.

*Editor's note:* See also "CDC Pulls the Plug on Rotavirus Vaccine" in our Nov. 15, 1999 issue, or in our on line archives at [www.ChiroWeb.com/archives/17/24/04.html](http://www.ChiroWeb.com/archives/17/24/04.html) .

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### Aging Mental Attitude

Research published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*<sup>2</sup> suggests that some of the physical unsteadiness and accidents associated with aging can be blamed on psychological conditioning. Using a shoe insert specially designed to monitor gait, researchers compared two groups of elderly men and women. The groups played a computer game embedded with subliminal messages. One group received positive messages such as "wise" "astute" and "accomplished" while the other were given terms like "senile," "dependent" and "diseased." After the game, the groups were asked to take a walk. The positive group showed a "profound" improvement in their walking technique compared to previous measurements.

Improvements included speed, which was an average of nine percent faster, and lessened "shuffling" which was measured by the time each "swinging foot" was off the ground. The group that received negative subliminal messages showed no change, suggesting that they were already programmed in this manner. Researchers hypothesize that the elderly in general accept many negative stereotypes about their condition and behave accordingly.

2. JAGS, November 1999.

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### Exercise and Diabetes Development

For those of you who haven't yet gotten the message that exercise is vital to maintain your health, here

is yet another study to consider. Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health report that you can cut your risk of developing adult-onset diabetes in half by getting a daily total of one hour of moderate exercise each day. The workout can be spread throughout the day and may include such activities as a brisk walk to the bus stop, climbing a few flights of stairs, or doing housework.<sup>3</sup>

3. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, October 20, 1999.

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#### Exercise and Breast Cancer

A study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*<sup>4</sup> concludes that exercise offers some protection from breast cancer. The study involved 85,364 women participating in a nurses' health study. Daily brisk exercisers were diagnosed with breast cancer 20 percent less often than those who exercised less than one hour per week. Researchers believe that the benefit is due to exercise's suppressive effects on estrogen.

4. AIM, October 25, 1999.

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#### Fiber and Fat

A new study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*<sup>5</sup> reports that dietary fiber appears to help prevent excessive weight gain as people age. Young adults who consumed at least 21 grams of fiber each day gained eight pounds less over a 10-year period than those consuming small amounts. The study involved more than 2,900 subjects. Fiber, in fact, proved a more reliable indicator than fat in predicting who would gain weight over time.

5. *JAMA*, October 27, 1999.

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#### Sleep Loss and Aging

Work from the University of Chicago<sup>6</sup> suggests that chronic sleep loss not only causes immediate mental and physical problems, but also may hasten the onset of, or at least mimic, certain age-related disorders. Researchers monitored blood chemistry of 11 healthy young men who were allowed to sleep only four hours each night for six nights. At the end of this time, their blood glucose levels had increased significantly and the response of insulin secretion to glucose diminished by 30 percent. The researchers compared this to similar responses in adult-onset diabetes. Cortisol levels also increased, a finding that has been linked to memory problems. These readings returned to normal after a few nights of sleeping 12 hours.

6. *The Lancet*, October 23, 1999.

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## Antidepressants and Intestinal Bleeding

Spanish researchers report a statistical correlation between antidepressant drugs and intestinal bleeding. Actually, the danger appears to be taking the drugs with aspirin or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. The combination appears to produce a larger risk than the individual risks added together. The antidepressant drugs studied were selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), a class that includes Prozac. The study involved 1,600 people with upper GI bleeding.<sup>7</sup>

7. *British Medical Journal*, October 23, 1999.

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## E. coli and a Cow's Diet

Cornell University researchers investigating the pathogenicity of E. coli bacteria in beef products in 1998 made an interesting discovery: it depends on the cow's diet. Grain-fed cattle appeared to culture versions that resisted acidic conditions, such as found in the human stomach. However, if the diet was switched to hay, the bacteria became sensitive to acid and did not survive a trip through the stomach. Another study in the summer of 1999 concluded that it is not so much the content of the diet, but a dietary change that sensitizes the germs. A change in feed five days before slaughter seems to be enough to render E. coli relatively harmless. The researchers warn, though, that raw manure exposed to oxygen for a period of time tends to cultivate bacteria that regain their resistance to acids.<sup>8</sup>

8. Associated Press, October 21, 1999 reporting on work done by Dr. Robert Elder of the USDA in Clay Center, Nebraska, and James Russel of Cornell University.

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## Breast Cancer Risks of the Wealthy

A study sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has reached some interesting conclusions about breast cancer victims. Researchers randomly surveyed 1,350 women from two different neighborhoods near Boston: one with predominately higher income and from better-educated families, and one with lower socioeconomic status. The higher-income neighborhood, it turns out, also had a higher rate of breast cancer. Researchers suspect the cause is not income or education of course, but environment. A much larger percentage of the women reporting cancers used professional lawn and/or dry cleaning services, and were more likely to use pesticides inside the home.<sup>9</sup>

9. Associated Press, October 20, 1999, reporting on research led by Dr. Nancy Maxwell of the Silent Spring Institute.

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## Irish Coffee for Stroke

University of Texas researchers, studying the effects of strokes on rats, reportedly have found an improbable new stroke treatment: a swig of alcohol with a coffee chaser. They say the combination

works just as well as potent drugs now in use for stroke treatment. For ischemic strokes (80 percent of stroke cases), alcohol administered by itself made the stroke worse. Caffeine alone had no effect, But the equivalent of one alcoholic drink followed by two or three cups of coffee offered "almost complete protection" from stroke damage. The effect is lost if the proportions are modified too much, and taking the mixture as a preventive measure (daily before the stroke happens) does not seem to work. More research is expected to follow, though the researchers are not getting many offers of funding from the major drug companies.<sup>10</sup>

10. Reported to the American Neurological Association meeting in Seattle, October 13, 1999, by Dr. James Grotta.

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### Iatrogenic C-Sections

A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*<sup>11</sup> illustrates one way that what should be normal, natural childbirths can be turned into cesarean deliveries by ignorant obstetricians. The study examined "white-coat hypertension"- high blood pressure readings that only appear when doctors are in the vicinity, presumably caused by a patient's fear or nervousness around their physician. This study found that nearly one-third of pregnant women showed this false positive reading, but portable monitors showed their pressure returned to normal after leaving the doctor's office. Their doctors tended to believe it was real hypertension, or just decided to "play it safe" and prescribed anti-hypertensive drugs. The drugs, in turn, undermined the women's ability to have normal labor contractions; thus C-sections were ultimately required for delivery in about half of these women. Overall, the C-section rate in women with "white-coat hypertension" was nearly four times that of the women who showed normal blood pressure readings.

11. *JAMA*, October 20, 1999.

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### Breastfeeding vs. Leukemia

The *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*<sup>12</sup> reports that breastfeeding seems to offer some protection against childhood leukemia. This study involved 2,200 children and contradicts some previous smaller studies that reported no correlation. This work found a 30 percent reduction in leukemia for babies breastfed for at least six months. A smaller reduction in risk (21 percent) was noted if the infant was breastfed for only one month. The effect is thought to be due to immunological factors transmitted in the mother's milk.

12. *JNCI*, October 20, 1999.

JANUARY 2000