

AU InforMed

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NEW DRUGS, and other related stuff ...

MedWatch ... Novartis and the FDA announced revisions to the WARNINGS and PRECAUTIONS sections of the prescribing information for Trileptal[®] (oxcarbazepine) tablets and oral suspension, indicated for use as monotherapy or adjunctive therapy in the treatment of partial seizures in adults and children ages 4-16 years with epilepsy. The updated WARNINGS section describes serious dermatological reactions, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS) and toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN) that have been reported in both children and adults in association with Trileptal[®] use. The PRECAUTIONS section includes language regarding multi-organ hypersensitivity reactions that have been reported in association with Trileptal[®] use. Read the complete MedWatch 2005 safety summary, including links to the Dear Healthcare Professional letter and revised, highlighted label at:
www.fda.gov/medwatch/SAFETY/2005/safety05.htm#trileptal

MedWatch ... Berlex, Inc. reminded healthcare professionals of the prescribing information for Betaseron[®] (interferon beta-1b) as it pertains to hepatic toxicity. Betaseron[®] is approved for the treatment of relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis. There have been reports during post-marketing safety surveillance of serious hepatic injury including autoimmune hepatitis and severe liver damage leading to hepatic failure and transplant. Liver function testing is recommended at regular intervals (one, three, and six months) following introduction then periodically thereafter. Read the complete FDA MedWatch 2005 Safety Summary, including a link to the Dear Healthcare Professional letter, at:
www.fda.gov/medwatch/SAFETY/2005/safety05.htm#Betaseron

MedWatch ...Pfizer Inc. and FDA notified healthcare professionals of the voluntary recall of one lot (40,000 bottles) of 100 mg capsules of Neurontin[®], after a manufacturing mechanical failure resulted in some bottles containing empty or partially filled capsules. Patients taking Neurontin[®] to control epilepsy could experience seizures from a missed dose of the product. 100 mg strength capsules from lot #15224V -- distributed in October and November, 2004 -- are included in the recall. Read the FDA MedWatch 2005 Safety summary, including a link to the press release at:
<http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/SAFETY/2005/safety05.htm#Neurontin>

 **Spongeworthy** ... The Today[®] Sponge contraceptive is back on the market after a several year hiatus. Apparently the product was removed several years ago due to problems at the manufacturing plant; safety or efficacy were not questioned. A new company took over, Allendale Pharmaceuticals and after lengthy applications, received FDA approval.
http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2005-04-22-sponge-contraceptive_x.htm (USA Today)
<http://www.todaysponge.com/> (Company web site)

FROM THE LAY LITERATURE about medicine ...



Health Tools ... A number of tools providing medical information specifically for older adults have debuted on the Internet recently.

The American Geriatrics Society's Foundation for Health in Aging launched "Aging in the Know: Your Gateway to Health and Aging Resources on the Web"

(www.healthinaging.org/agingintheknow) for general information about diseases and disorders and a "What to Ask" site, providing condition-specific questions. A "How We Age" section includes information about physical activity, preventive screening, and the aging process.

NIH Senior Health (nihseniorhealth.gov), is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for older people. Health Compass (www.healthcompass.org), was created by two nonprofit groups, the American Federation for Aging Research and the Merck Institute of Aging and Health to help older adults find and evaluate reliable information about aging and health.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has a feature, Hospital Compare (www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov) that offers data on 17 widely accepted quality measures in treating heart attacks, heart failure and pneumonia. It shows how most of the country's general hospitals perform compared with state and national averages -- and against local competitors.

To keep track of changes in benefits for Medicare (www.medicare.gov). Fidelity Investments now estimates that the average 65-year-old couple retiring this year would need \$190,000 to cover medical costs in the next 15 to 20 years, up 9% from last year's estimate of \$175,000. The calculation includes Medicare premiums, co-payments and deductibles, and out-of-pocket prescription-drug costs, but it doesn't factor in over-the-counter drugs, most dental expenses or long-term care.

Greene K. Health tools on the web. *Wall Street Journal online* 2005 Apr 17.

New Poll ... A new Kaiser Family Foundation health poll report has been released and includes some interesting information. For instance, over 75% of the U.S. population polled supports the idea of allowing prescription drug imports from Canada and the same number thinks the recent law should be changed to allow the federal government to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for better prices on drugs for Medicare. Other polling information shows the number of people with a negative opinion of the Medicare drug discount program to be decreasing. –

Michele Richard, Pharm.D. Candidate

For all of the data, go to:

http://www.kff.org/healthpollreport/apr_2005/index.cfm



Newer Poll ... hey pharmacists! ... In a survey of 17,685 seniors conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Commonwealth Fund and Tufts-New England Medical Center, 40% of seniors stated that they haven't taken all their prescribed drugs in the past year, due to high costs, because they didn't think the drugs were helping them, or because they didn't think they needed them. The survey also revealed that 89% of seniors taking prescription drugs in the past year, 46% take five or more; 54% use multiple prescribers, and 35% use more than one pharmacy. Among seniors with at least three chronic health conditions, 73% take five or more medications regularly and 52% do not take all their drugs as prescribed. For more data, go to:

<http://www.kff.org/medicare/med041905nr.cfm>



Eco-Labels ... So, you consider yourself environmentally conscious, a friend of the earth? Just to make sure and to do your homework, go to the site below on “eco-labels.” It is a site sponsored by the Consumer’s Union to help lessen the confusion over the various labeling given to food such as “organic”, “free range” and similar terms.

<http://eco-labels.org/home.cfm>



Takes a licking and keeps on hiding ... “Clocky” is a new alarm clock that is a bit ugly, but when it goes off and you hit the Snooze bar, it rolls off the table and hides. This causes the less-than-motivated to have to get out of bed and go find it to turn it off. Ring any bells?

Clever clock stops you sleeping late. *CNN* 2005 Apr 4.

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/TECH/04/04/spark.clocky/index.html>



Hey kids, bad news ... If you think you can lead a hedonistic life of sloth, fast food and generally unhealthy living, but change your ways when you’re “old” and come out of it clean, *WRONG*. An interesting article in the *New York Times* basically says that while it’s always a good idea to “change your ways” don’t expect miracles!

Kolata G. The body heretic: It scorns our efforts. *New York Times.com* 2005 Apr 17.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/17/weekinreview/17kola.html>



Guiliani Report ... In the report released April 11, 2005, “Examination and Assessment of Prescription Drug Importation from Foreign Sources to the United States,” by Giuliani Partners, headed by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Mr. Giuliani says that the risks of importing drugs from outside the U.S. far outweigh any alleged benefits. It primarily calls for a moratorium on import legislation until safety and security concerns can be fully addressed. The report was commissioned by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

<http://www.phrma.org>

AUBURN HSOP FACULTY in the literature ...

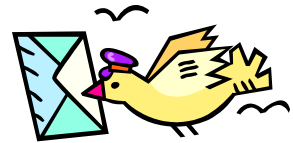
- Stamm PL, Kelley KW, Donaldson AR. Minimizing cardiovascular morbidity and mortality in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus: A literature review. *Adv Pharm* 2005;3(1):23-50.
- Wargo KA, Baty SR, Knowles G. Clopidogrel versus aspirin and esomeprazole to prevent recurrent bleeding (letter). *N Engl J Med* 2005 Apr 21;352(16):1717

 **The last “dose” ...**



For you postal history buffs:

Zoning Improvement Plan (ZIP): Established in 1963, a system of five-digit codes or ZIP codes that identifies the individual post office or metropolitan area delivery station associated with every mailing address. This system was later expanded to ZIP+4, which includes more defined delivery areas.



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