Aspirin: New Uses for an Old Medicine

Aspirin has been widely used as an over-the-counter medication for decades. It reduces pain, fever and inflammation. More recent uses include these conditions:

- **Heart disease**—Aspirin is often used to prevent heart attacks in people with heart disease or other factors that raise heart attack risk. Emergency personnel may give it to patients with suspected heart attacks.

- **Stroke**—People who have had a transient ischemic attack or ischemic stroke are sometimes advised to take aspirin—either immediately or long term to prevent a recurrence. But it’s not recommended if there is any bleeding in the brain.

- **Artery disease**—Aspirin may prevent clots from forming in small arteries.

- **Colon cancer**—Early evidence suggests aspirin may help prevent the formation of colon polyps and colon cancer.

Always get your provider’s OK before taking aspirin. Aspirin isn’t for everyone, especially those with conditions such as aspirin allergy or an ulcer. Children and teens with viral infections should not take aspirin.

Focus on Cholesterol

**September is Cholesterol Education Month.** How much do you know about this substance that’s critical to heart health? Test your knowledge.

1. **T □ F □** Your body needs cholesterol.

2. **T □ F □** The best time to begin checking cholesterol levels is age 40.

3. **T □ F □** You want your cholesterol numbers to show a high LDL and a low HDL, and your total cholesterol to stay below 250.

4. **T □ F □** Lack of exercise is a risk factor for elevated cholesterol.

**Answers**

1. True—The body needs cholesterol to function normally. However, too much of the LDL (bad) cholesterol can build up in and block your arteries, putting you at risk for heart disease and stroke.

2. False—Experts advise adults to have their cholesterol checked every 5 years starting at age 20.

3. False—Desirable cholesterol levels: LDL below 130 mg/dL, HDL above 40, and triglycerides (a blood fat) below 150. Strive to keep your total cholesterol below 200.

4. True—Exercise routinely, lose excess weight, don’t smoke, reduce intake of processed foods containing saturated or trans fat, and take prescribed medication.
Fruits and Vegetables
- Are you getting enough?

If your plate is always half-filled with vegetables and you snack on fruit between meals, you are likely getting the recommended minimum of 2 cups of fruits and 2 1/2 cups of vegetables you need daily. But many Americans fall short of this goal.

Getting enough vegetables and fruit can help combat high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar—all heart disease risk factors. Spruce up your plate:

Start with salad. Use dark green leafy lettuces (spinach, romaine, kale) and add your favorite vegetables or fruit-on-top.

Add vegetables where there were none before. Try layers of meaty mushrooms and eggplant in lasagna, or squash in macaroni and cheese.

Enjoy fruit for dessert. Try tropical fruit salad, cinnamon-baked apples or spiced poached pears.

Roast those vegetables. Add some olive oil and balsamic vinegar to purple cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, beets or broccoli, and cook until tender-crisp, about 30 minutes.

Keep sliced vegetables handy. Studies show we eat 29% more vegetables when they or in our sight line.

Weight-Loss Goals: For Real

Set small goals. Losing weight, even just a few pounds, can boost your confidence, your energy and your desire to succeed.

Have small, nutritious meals and snacks. It’s the best way to keep your energy and metabolism elevated and your appetite low.

Plan every meal and snack. Without a plan, once your hunger strikes, you’re very likely to make choices that slow down weight loss.

Include favorite foods. Severely limiting food choices doesn’t aid weight loss. Just eat high-calorie favorites less often and in smaller portions, and fill up on fruits and vegetables.

Weigh weekly. People who weigh themselves once a week are more likely to meet their weight-loss goals and keep the weight off.

Exercise. You need to do regular physical activity beyond what you do ordinarily each day. Try to burn at least 100 extra calories a day.

Track your food and activity for a few weeks. You’ll find eating behaviors that may sabotage your weight goals, and those which help you succeed.

"Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later."

Helpful Household Hints

- A dull knife will cut cheese better than a sharp knife.
- Prevent wax drippings from a birthday candle running into cake frosting by using small marshmallows as candleholders.
- Chewing gum while peeling onions help to prevent tears.
- Use a wet knife to cut a cake.
- Use a wet knife to slice hard boiled eggs (prevents egg yolk from crumbling).
- To make boiled eggs easier to peel, add some salt to the water before boiling, and then peel under cold water.
September Gardening

Shrubs and trees
- Work on a landscape plan for fall planting of trees and shrubs. Most of the planting should wait until late October and November, but supplies will be at their peak in garden centers.
- Fertilize roses one last time
- Prune rambler roses
- Prune to remove any diseased and dead rose canes
- Root prune wisteria that doesn't bloom

Perennials, annuals, and bulbs
- Plan spring bulb gardens and purchase bulbs. A variety of bulbs can have different heights and bloom times, so create your gardens accordingly. Most of the planting should wait until October, but supplies will be at their peak in garden centers.
- Divide, transplant and label perennials. As these plants die back in the fall, it is a great time to divide older plants. Complete divisions by mid October to allow the roots time to establish themselves before winter. Be sure to keep newly divided plants watered.
- If you've grown tender bulbs this summer such as caladium, dahlia, gladiolus this is the month to dig them and put them into storage for next year's use.
- Continue to take garden notes and /or photographs to plan future plantings.
- Collect seed from perennials and annuals.
- Continue to cut flowers for drying: yarrow, strawflower, gomphrena, cockscomb, etc
- Remove and compost spent annuals and fallen leaves
- Plant late season annuals like pansies, snapdragons, *Dianthus chinensis*, ornamental kale and cabbage for fall through spring color.

Lawn care
- De-thatch and core aerate existing lawns to promote root growth and improve fertilizer absorption and seed germination.
- Lime lawns if a soil test indicates it is necessary.
- Perk up your lawn by fertilizing with nitrogen fertilizers. These will speed lawn growth, thicken the lawn and improve its color.
- If you have thin or bare areas in your lawn, seed and mulch them to reduce erosion and weeds.
- Fall is also the time to introduce new, improved varieties or a tall-fescue blend. You should do your seeding by mid-October, but you can fertilize as late as mid-November.
- Get your Bermuda grass or Zoysia lawns ready for winter by increasing the cutting height this month. This helps buffer these grasses from cold damage.
- Applying a fertilizer with potassium can also increase the hardiness of your warm season grasses to winter cold. Look for fertilizers formulated with a preemergence herbicide to prevent seeds of annual bluegrass and other winter weeds from germinating and competing with your grasses for light, nutrients and water.
- If you find your lawn is too shady for grass, now would be a great time to remove lower limbs and "dead wood" from large trees greatly increasing the amount of light reaching your lawn.
- Remove algae and moss from a shady lawn by raking or applying copper sulfate.
- Since grasses growing in shade are usually weak and spindly, remove fallen leaves as much as possible.

Fruits and veggies
- Keep harvesting herbs, especially tender herbs like basil. Put basil in sealed plastic bags for freezer.
- Keep Harvesting tomatoes, peppers, etc. Harvest onions and garlic as soon as the tops fall over and begin to dry out.
- You can still plant cool season crops including leaf lettuce, spinach, cabbage, broccoli, Swiss chard, parsley, and radishes.
Vegetables and Hamburger Skillet

1 pound lean ground beef
3 cups tomatoes, diced
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup frozen corn
2 cups chopped green peppers
1 tablespoon minced garlic


Nutrition Facts

Servings per Recipe: 5 1-cup servings
Amount Per Serving
Calories 292 Calories from Fat
Total Fat 16 g
Cholesterol 63 mg
Sodium 73 mg
Carbohydrate 18 g
Dietary Fiber 3 g
Protein 20 g
Exchange 1 starch, 3 meat
Carbohydrate Units 1

Smothered Chicken

2½ pounds boneless chicken breast (skin and fat removed)
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1 can (10¾-ounce) low-fat cream of chicken soup
½ cup canned, sliced or broken mushroom pieces and liquid
½ cup water
2 tablespoons parsley flakes
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon reduced sodium soy sauce
1½ tablespoons cornstarch
¼ cup cold water

Preheat oven to 350°. Cut chicken into bite-size pieces. Season with pepper and place in large baking dish. Combine remaining ingredients except cornstarch and pour over chicken. Cover baking dish with foil. Bake at 350° until tender - about 1½ hours. Remove foil. Drain liquid from chicken into saucepan and return chicken to oven for a few minutes. Thicken liquid by bringing to boil and adding cornstarch dissolved in water. Stir frequently. Pour thickened liquid over chicken. May serve with rice or noodles.

Nutrition Facts

Servings per Recipe: 12
Amount Per Serving
Calories 102 Calories from Fat 9
Total Fat 1 g
Cholesterol 41 mg
Sodium 455 mg
Carbohydrate 5 g
Dietary Fiber 0 g
Protein 18 g
Exchange 3 very lean meats
Carbohydrate Units 0

Banana Chocolate Enchiladas

1 firm medium banana
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 flour tortillas (7-8 inches in diameter)

1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon Splenda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons lite chocolate syrup
nonstick cooking spray

Heat oven to 450°F. Spray cookie sheet with nonstick spray. Combine sugar, Splenda, and cinnamon. Peel banana and cut lengthwise in half. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Place 1 banana half on each tortilla. Sprinkle banana with cinnamon mixture, reserving some to sprinkle on top. Roll each tortilla around banana half. Place seam side down on cookie sheet. Spray with nonstick cooking spray and sprinkle with remaining cinnamon mixture. Bake about 7 minutes until starting to brown. Remove and place on serving plate. Drizzle with chocolate syrup.