

HEALTH & FITNESS

CITY OF MICHIGAN CITY

Most OTC Cough Syrups Don't Work

By Amanda Gardener,
HealthDay Reporter

There's no scientific evidence to suggest that the over-the-counter cough medicines that line pharmacy shelves really work, a leading physicians' group has concluded.

"The bottom line is, when you look at the well-done scientific studies, there are very few showing that any of the cough and cold products that we often buy are, in fact, effective for the acute cough from the common cold," said Dr. Peter Dicipinigitis, director of the Montefiore Cough Center in New York City. "We're not saying there's no role for any of these products, but for the common cold, there are very few good studies showing that any of

these drugs do work."

The finding was part of new guidelines released by the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP.) Dicipinigitis, who's also director of the intensive care unit at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, was one of the authors of the guidelines.

According to the ACCP, 29.5 million of the estimated 82.9 million annual visits to office-based physicians in the United States are for cough.

"Cough is the single most common reason that patients in the U.S. go to their doctor," said Dicipinigitis. "Since it's a problem that's so huge, we certainly felt that well-written, state-of-the-art guidelines

were necessary to help physicians all over the country deal with this common and often very difficult problem."

And the cough that comes with the common cold tends to be "particularly stubborn," Dicipinigitis said.

So is there a remedy for constant, painful hacking, other than chicken soup?

One is time, which eventually heals all wounds, even the common cough, according to the ACCP.

Products containing older-generation antihistamines such as diphenhydramine (found in Benadryl®), with or without a decongestant, may be of benefit, Dicipinigitis said.

Special points of interest:

- Codeine and Dextromethorphan may be effective, but they usually come in doses too small to do much good.
- Cough due to common cold should not last more than three weeks.
- If you think you have a cold, but you do not have any "nasal symptoms," you probably don't have a cold. Go see your doctor.
- Children age 14 and under should NOT be given adult over-the-counter cough and cold preparations.
- Adults up to age 65 should receive the NEW whooping cough vaccine.
- Liquid antibiotics, such as those often prescribed for children's ear infections, begin to lose their effectiveness after 14 days even though refrigerated.

Take Drug Expiration Dates Seriously

By Kathleen Doheny,
HealthDay Reporter

You grab an aspirin or uncover a prescription drug that used to soothe your back pain—and then discover that the expiration date is long past.

Should you use the medication or not?

Some pharmaceutical experts are fond of pointing to a study done for the U.S. Army that found that many drugs were still usable nearly five years after the expiration date. But other experts say it isn't worth the risk, and you should toss old drugs. Even the researchers, in

their report, stated the additional stability period is "highly variable," depending on the drug.

The longer you go beyond the expiration date, the more question there is about the drug's activity.



Emotional Eating



Emotional eating is the practice of consuming large quantities of food -- usually comfort or junk foods -- in

response to feelings instead of hunger. Experts estimate that 75% of overeating is caused by emotions.

Many of us learn that food can bring comfort, at least in the short-term. As a result, we often turn to food to heal emotional problems. Eating becomes a habit preventing us from learning skills that can effectively resolve our emotional distress.

Depression, boredom, loneliness, chronic anger, anxiety, frustration, stress, problems with interpersonal relationships and poor self-esteem can result in overeating and unwanted weight gain.

By identifying what triggers our eating, we can substitute more appropriate techniques to manage our emotional problems and take food and weight gain out of the equation.

How Can I Identify Eating Triggers?

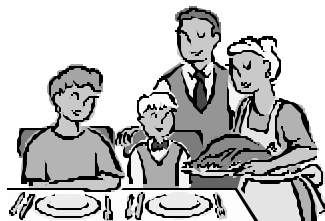
Situations and emotions that trigger us to eat fall into five main categories.

- **Social.** Eating when around other people. For example, excessive eating can result from being encouraged by others to eat; eating to fit in; arguing; or feelings of inadequacy around other people.
- **Emotional.** Eating in

response to boredom, stress, fatigue, tension, depression, anger, anxiety or loneliness as a way to "fill the void."

- **Situational.** Eating because the opportunity is there. For example, at a restaurant, seeing an advertisement for a particular food, passing by a bakery. Eating may also be associated with certain activities such as watching TV, going to the movies or a sporting event, etc.
- **Thoughts.** Eating as a result of negative self-worth or making excuses for eating. For example, scolding oneself for looks or a lack of will power.
- **Physiological.** Eating in response to physical cues. For example, increased hunger due to skipping meals or eating to cure headaches or other pain.

To identify what triggers excessive eating in you, keep a food diary that records what and when you eat as well as what stressors, thoughts, or emotions you identify as you eat. You should begin to identify patterns to your excessive eating fairly quickly.



How Do I Break Myself of the Habit?

Identifying eating triggers is the first step; however, this alone is not sufficient to alter eating behavior. Usually, by the time you have identified a pattern, eating in response to emotions or certain situations has become a pattern. Now you have to break the habit.

Developing alternatives to eating is the second step. When you start to reach for food in response to a trigger, try one of the following activities instead.

- Read a good book or magazine or listen to music
- Go for a walk or jog
- Take a bubble bath
- Do deep breathing exercises
- Play cards or a board game
- Talk to a friend
- Do housework, laundry or yard work
- Wash the car
- Write a letter
- Or do any other pleasurable or necessary activity until the urge to eat passes

What If Distracting Myself Isn't Enough to Keep Me From Eating?

Sometimes simply distracting yourself from eating and developing alternative habits is not

enough to manage the emotional distress that leads to excessive eating. To more effectively cope with emotional stress, try

- Relaxation exercises
- Meditation
- Individual or group counseling

These techniques address the underlying emotional problems which are causing you to binge and teach you to cope in more effective and healthier ways. For



more information on these techniques, contact your doctor.

As you learn to incorporate more appropriate coping strategies and to curb excessive eating, remember to reward yourself for a job well done. We tend to repeat behaviors that have been reinforced, so reward yourself when you meet your nutrition management goals. Buy that blouse, take that vacation, or get that massage you wanted. By rewarding yourself for a job well done you increase the likelihood that you will maintain your new healthy habits.





Nutrition 101: Part A

Most health experts recommend eating a balanced, healthy diet to maintain or lose weight. But what is a healthy diet?

The basic components of a healthy diet include the right amount of:

- Protein (found in fish, meat, poultry, dairy products, eggs, and beans)
- Fat (found in animal and dairy products, nuts, and oils)
- Carbohydrates (found in fruits, certain vegetables, pasta, rice, grains, beans and other legumes, and certain sweets)

- Vitamins (such as vitamins A, B, C, D, E, and K)
- Minerals (such as calcium, potassium, and iron)
- Water

What Are Calories?

Of these six nutrients, only carbohydrates, proteins, and fats provide calories. A calorie is a measurement, just like a teaspoon or an inch. Calories are the amount of energy released when your body breaks down food. The more calories a food has, the more energy it can provide to your

body. When you eat more calories than you need, your body stores the extra calories as fat. Even low-carb and fat-free foods can have a lot of calories that can be stored as fat.

What Are Proteins?

Proteins are nutrients that are essential to the building, maintenance, and repair of body tissue such as the skin, the internal organs, and muscle. Proteins are also the major components of our immune system and hormones.

(continued on last page)

Is Your Life Running You Ragged?

"Me time" is a distant memory for Kate Wiley. Most days she can barely catch her breath between caring for her 18-month-old son, working, and studying to become a dietitian. "Housework, spending time with my son, a date night with my husband, working, schoolwork -- the list goes on. There are weeks when I feel like I am running at 110% with no time to stop," Wiley tells WebMD. "The house isn't clean, I have too many things to do for my internship, and I want to spend time with my child -- quality time where we get to sit and read or cuddle or play. There doesn't seem to be enough time for it all."

If this sounds like your life, you're in good company. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, most parents with children younger than 18 work outside the home, including a majority of mothers with infants and toddlers. It's no surprise that working moms and dads, particularly those with additional responsibilities such as caring for an aging parent, find it difficult to make time for themselves. Activities that contribute to health, such as preparing nutritious meals, exercising, and pursuing hobbies tend to become elusive goals if they make the list at all.

"The last thing on my list is time for me," Wiley says, "and the lack of downtime

often makes me feel overwhelmed and ready to crack."

Almost everyone feels overwhelmed on occasion, but how do you know if your life is chronically out of balance? Prominent personal coach Laura Berman Fortgang tells WebMD, "You know it's time to make a change when misery and stress outweigh joy on a daily basis for two weeks or more."

Fortgang, who is the author of *Living Your Best Life and NOW WHAT? 90 Days to a New Life Direction*, recommends evaluating the state of your life with the following quiz.

True or false:

1. I have more than enough time to do what I want to do.
2. I am on a health regimen that helps me feel energized.
3. I look forward to every day.
4. There are no people in my life (at home or at work) who drain me.
5. I love my home (location, contents, the feel, the style).
6. I have no clutter in my home and/or office.
7. I live a life pursuing what I want instead of what I should do.
8. My work is satisfying and rewarding.

9. I take at least two weeklong vacations a year.

10. I do not work on weekends.

11. I get plenty of sleep.

12. I have plenty of quality time with my children and/or the people who matter to me.

13. I have at least one hobby or pastime outside of my work and family activities.

14. I eat foods that make me feel energized instead of sluggish.

15. I have the space to take at least 15 minutes of silence a day.

16. I have friends that are easy to be with and a joy to spend time with.

17. I carry no heavy emotional burdens or addictive behaviors.

Give yourself one point for every time you said "true." If you answered "true" more often than "false" (a score of at least 9), you are probably living a well-balanced life. If you scored 8 or less, your lifestyle may need some fine-tuning.

Ask yourself what you are hating, tolerating, or resenting about the current state of your life. Make a list and start doing your best to correct things right away.

Next Time: 5 Tips For A Balanced Life

Living Well is our goal as a community.

Mayor Chuck Oberlie
100 E. Michigan Blvd.
Michigan City, IN 46360
219/873-1400
mayorchucko@emichigancity.com

This quarterly newsletter addresses a variety of health, fitness, and quality of life issues.

Sources of Information:

- Insurance: Shelly Dunleavy shellyd@emichigancity.com
- St. Anthony Memorial Hospital www.samhc.org
- WebMD www.webmd.com
- President's Council on Physical Fitness www.fitness.gov
- American Council on Fitness www.acefitness.org
- Arthritis www.arthritis.org

A new Wellness display is in the Personnel Office at City Hall.

Each month, a new topic will be covered and informational brochures will be available on various health topics.

Stop in and see what's new!

Nutrition 101: Part A (continued)



Proteins are made up of substances called amino acids -- 22 are considered vital for

health. Of these, the adult body can make 14; the other eight (called essential amino acids) can only be obtained from what we eat.

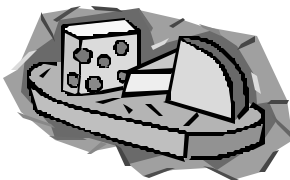
Proteins are found in all types of food, but only fish, meat, eggs, cheese, and other foods from animal sources contain complete proteins, meaning they provide the eight essential amino acids.

Your daily diet must contain enough protein to replenish these amino acids. Thus, if you are vegetarian and do not eat food from animal sources, you need to eat a variety of plant proteins in combination to ensure that you get enough of the essential amino acids.

The new dietary reference values for protein for adults are 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight. This translates to about 0.36 grams of protein per pound.

Is Any Fat Healthy?

A certain amount of fat in the diet is good and necessary to be healthy. Adults should get 20%-35% of their calories from fat. However, nutrition experts agree that most Americans should eat less fat than they currently do. Research shows that excessive intake of fat -- especially trans fat and saturated fat -- and cholesterol increases the risk of heart disease. Eating too much fat can cause excess body weight, since a gram of fat has about twice as many calories per gram as carbohydrates (see below) and proteins. (There are 9 calories per gram of fat compared with 4 calories for protein and carbohydrates.)



Fat is made up of compounds called fatty acids or lipids. Depending on their chemical structure, these fatty acids are called monounsaturated, polyunsaturated, saturated, or trans fats. Trans fats and saturated fats are the unhealthiest fats to eat.



Trans fats are formed when manufacturers turn liquid oils into solid fats, such as with shortening and hard margarine. Trans fats can also be found in many foods, including crackers (even healthy-sounding ones like Nabisco Wheat Thins), cereals, baked goods, snack foods, salad dressings, fried foods, and many other processed foods.

Problems with too much dietary fat come when 10% or more of your daily calories come from saturated fats such as those found in meats, high-fat dairy products, and butter and foods cooked or made with hydrogenated fats. And consuming trans fats in any amount is also not recommended. These practices may lead to high blood cholesterol levels and heart disease.

Next time: Carbohydrates, Vitamins, Water, and What Makes A Diet Healthy.