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# Focus on Health

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December 2005

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## Fish Oil

**W**hat can people take in place of non-steroidal anti inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for arthritis pain? Reports suggest NSAIDs increase the risk of hypertension, heart attacks, liver and kidney disease. Omega 3 fatty acids (fish oil capsules) may be a better alternative unless the person has heart rhythm and heart rate problems such as atrial fibrillation. This condition might be worsened by omega 3 fatty acids, although several other studies find the opposite. Or maybe one can alternate drugs on a regular basis to lower overall consumption of each.

## CPAP FOR DIABETICS

**D**iabetics who slept with continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) for at least 4 hours per night lowered their post meal blood glucose levels from 191 to 130. There was also a statistically significant fall in the number of blood glucose levels greater than 200 for the whole study group. Glycohemoglobin levels dropped from 9.2 to 8.6% for those who had baseline levels of more than 7%. Also, even moderate sleep apnea is a risk factor for stroke.

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## Herbal Remedies Can Be Dangerous

A recent report in the British Medical Journal points out that herbal remedies are not supervised by the Federal Drug Administration or anyone else and can be dangerous. Example in the article: a woman who suddenly became blind in one eye after starting an herbal remedy for menopausal symptoms. It contained red clover, Mexican yam, black cohosh and deng quai. Herbal remedies vary in potency and are potentially dangerous by virtue of their unknown potency.

## Hair Loss?

**H**air loss can be triggered by a variety of factors: pregnancy, stress, surgery and hormonal changes are a few. But few people realize that weight loss can also cause hair to shed, likely due to nutritional deficiency. Women are most likely to notice it and seek treatment.

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## Get A Second Opinion

**A**re second opinions a good idea? I think so, inspite of a recent article in The Wall Street Journal saying that most medical and surgical conditions for which treatment is recommended are straight forward and do not warrant a second opinion.

As part of the professional services I feel should be provided by me to my patients, screening of the voluminous medical literature has become more and more important. Please read this now if you have time before I see you, so that we can further discuss whichever topic especially interests you.

Perhaps you have seen an item that I have not included in this list or have not seen myself. If so, feel free to bring it to my attention.

## Obesity and Alzheimer's

**A**lso in the BMJ, true obesity doubles the risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease later in life, as well as many other medical problems.