
Focus on Health

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Gynecologic Endocrinology

MRI Effects

MRI studies can be performed safely on patients with implantable cardiac devices, according to two articles in the October 2011 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*. No devices experienced long-term dysfunction that required device revision or reprogramming. In addition, airport security systems will not harm a pacemaker.

Breast Cancer

Researchers report that increased carbohydrate intake is associated with a higher rate of breast cancer recurrence in survivors of the disease. Starch intake seems to be particularly influential. The seven year study was presented at the annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

Midlife ED

Erectile dysfunction (ED) in midlife males stems most often from endothelial dysfunction, a consequence of dyslipidemia, diabetes, hypertension, or smoking. A study in which 3½ ounces of pistachios daily at lunch for 3 weeks were ingested increased penile blood flow velocity by more than 20%.

Mammogram Law

A new Texas law effective January 1, 2012 called Henda's Law requires that if a woman's mammogram reveals dense breast tissue, supplemental screening should be ordered. What type of supplemental screening is not specified, and this is to be chosen by the patient's physician.

Vaccination Required

The Jamie Schanbaum Nicolis Williams Act goes into effect on January 1, 2012 and is a state law which applies to all students entering Texas universities, living both on and off campus. It requires a meningitis vaccination.

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. The information in this newsletter is derived from periodicals and books which I have read and whose information I have consolidated. 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.

Stethoscopes

Stethoscopes can carry all sorts of nasty bacteria (*Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine*, July 2011). Why are doctors who are scrupulous about washing their hands less concerned about cleaning their stethoscopes, since they may hang around a doctor or nurse's neck for weeks at a time?

Sodium

High sodium intake significantly increases the risk of heart problems. This is no surprise and is found in a 5-year study appearing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* conducted on 28,000 men and women over age 55 at high risk for heart disease. However, too little sodium is almost as bad. Nutritionists who recommend a daily intake of 1.5 grams (1½ teaspoons) of salt are increasing the risk of cardiovascular death by 37%!

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