
Focus on Health

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Who Is Right?

Two articles which appeared almost simultaneously discussed the results of DHEA supplementation in regard to development of coronary artery disease. One article concluded that DHEA was protective; the other concluded it was causative.

Accurate Diagnosis

The FDA has approved NeutroSpec, a technique that could make it significantly easier to correctly diagnose appendicitis. Seven hundred thousand suspected cases per year are either operated on or not, based on an educated guess which is wrong 15 to 40% of the time because the appendix turns out to be normal. This test employs radioactive tracer white blood cells imaged by a gamma camera. Results are evident in an hour or less and are nearly 100% accurate.

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Truth About Drug Companies

The Pharmaceutical industry is now blanketing us with public relations messages repeating over and over like an incantation the magic words research, innovation, and American. The truth is that research and development is a relatively small part of their budgets – dwarfed by their vast expenditures on marketing and administration. Year after year the industry has been the most profitable in the United States. Second, the pharmaceutical industry is not especially innovative. The great majority of “new drugs” are not new at all, but merely variations of older drugs already on the market. Third, the industry is hardly a model of “American free enterprise”. It is an 800 pound gorilla that can exert direct pressure on the FDA for desired changes or affect Congress through “friends” who are recipients of huge campaign contributions.

Prostate Cancer

The link between prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test results and prostate cancer has been revised and debated for years. A new study finds that the rate of rise in a man’s PSA level, not the level itself, determines the risk of death from the disease. An increase of 2 points in a year indicates a ten fold increased risk of dying.

Emergency Contraception

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists strongly recommends that OB-GYN’s provide advance prescriptions for emergency contraception (Plan B) to all reproductive age women at every office visit.

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.

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