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The Health Reformer

Parents should keep activated charcoal in the medicine cabinet

NEW YORK, Dec 04 (Reuters Health) -- A "study found that activated charcoal, which soaks up poisons in the stomach, is more effective and easier to use than ipecac, a syrup that induces vomiting. Although activated charcoal is the preferred method for treating patients who swallow poison in hospitals, it is used less frequently at home due to concerns that it is too difficult to administer.

But according to a report on 115 children treated with activated charcoal at home after ingesting poison, none of the parents had any major problems administering the charcoal. What's more, children who took charcoal at home got quicker treatment than those cared for in a hospital emergency room--within 38 minutes versus 73 minutes, on average.

Studies indicate that the charcoal is most effective if given within 1 hour after ingesting poison, researchers explain in the December online edition of *Pediatrics*.

... 'Greater efforts need to be put into educating parents about the need to stock activated charcoal in the home in advance of a poisoning,' the authors add.

SOURCE: *Pediatrics* online 2001;108:e100.

Activated charcoal can also treat eye/ear infections, intestinal gas, diarrhea, indigestion, infections, pain, inflammation, and women's diseases. To learn everything about charcoal therapy, we recommend the book *Home Remedies* by Agatha Thrash, M.D. and Calvin Thrash, M.D. You can get this book by dialing 1-800-245-1844 (LMN Publishing International, Inc.). You may also contact us for more information.

Many kids catch their first glimpses of alcohol and cigarettes in G-rated films

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - While parents may worry their teens are smoking and drinking, a new analysis of G-rated movies suggests that many kids catch their first glimpses of alcohol and cigarettes through animated characters.

...Dr. Kimberly M. Thompson of Harvard University in Boston, Massachusetts, said parents know that many animated films dating back to 1940 depict alcohol and tobacco use.

"I think a lot of people think G-rated movies are for everyone," she said in an interview. But, according to Thompson, parents who want to shield their children from images of smoking and drinking should be aware that some of these movies might not be for them.

In a review of 81 animated films made between 1937 and 2000, Thompson and colleague Fumie Yokota found that nearly half featured alcohol use and almost as many depicted tobacco use. The context, of course,

differed among the films; some, for example, showed only fleeting glimpses of alcohol and tobacco, while others devoted several minutes to the behaviors.

Movies depicting such images ranged from classics including "Fantasia," "Dumbo" and "Alice in Wonderland" to more recent releases such as "Pocahontas" and "Tarzan."

... As for parents, some may want to turn smoke-filled animated movies into a way to broach the topic with their children, Thompson noted.

"They may want to take the opportunity to tell their kids what they think about [smoking and drinking]," she said.

Other parents may want to screen videos for smoking and drinking and keep them from their children altogether. What parents do, Thompson added, depends upon their views of alcohol and tobacco, their child's age and the context surrounding a movie's depiction of smoking and drinking.

But watching these movies with their kids, Thompson said, will at least give parents "a chance to say something." *HealthCentral.com* (June 4, 2001)

"... David Walsh, executive director of the National Institute on Media and the Family, said the media have a powerful influence.

'As certain behaviors get portrayed, that seems to normalize them,' he said."—ASSOCIATED PRESS
The Sun-Times Company (June 5, 2001)

AIDS cases linked to alcohol

"More than a third of AIDS cases are linked to injection of illegal drugs. Now alcohol has been shown to be a possible factor in the equation as well, according to a study published in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*. 'The average person has become complacent about AIDS,' said Michael Stein, associate professor of medicine at Brown University School of Medicine and lead author of the paper. 'In fact, certain groups affected by the epidemic, such as gay men in certain cities, have clearly become complacent. Risk behavior surveillance studies suggest these groups have recently increased their risk. Among another at-risk group, injection drug users, alcohol may not be considered an 'important' drug, or even a drug at all, yet it is likely to reduce certain inhibitions and lead to unsafe sex. 'Most reported cases of heterosexual transmission of the AIDS virus HIV occur through unprotected sex with users of heroin, cocaine and other injection drugs, he said. 'This situation needs to change dramatically,' Stein said. 'Given the high rates of alcohol abuse (Over, please)

and dependence in this sample, referrals to alcohol treatment should be available at needle exchanges. Health care providers need to pay attention to alcohol use when they are addressing the complications of drug use, as well as the behaviors of drug users.”

Pulse Direct, Inc. (October 17, 2001)

Varied diet prevents cancer

“Variety isn’t only the spice of life; it could be the secret to avoiding cancer, says experts at the American Institute of Cancer Research. Studies that compare the diet and disease rate of different populations have long shown that the risks of cancer and other diseases are substantially lower in countries whose citizens routinely consume a variety of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Since studies involving single foods or food components often fail to uncover strong protective associations, scientists around the world are now looking at the complex protective interactions that take place among the different components in the overall diet. ‘We eat foods, not just nutrients, and there is overwhelming evidence that eating up to a pound of diverse fruits and vegetables can markedly reduce the risks of common forms of cancer and other diseases,’ says Dr. David Heber, of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition. He urged Americans to eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day and to make a special effort to consume a diverse array of these foods.” *Pulse Direct, Inc. (August 3, 2001)*

“The meals should be varied. The same dishes, prepared in the same way, should not appear on the table meal after meal and day after day. The meals are eaten with greater relish, and the system is better nourished, when the food is varied.

Our bodies are constructed from what we eat; and in order to make tissues of good quality, we must have the right kind of food, and it must be prepared with such skill as will best adapt it to the wants of the system. It is a religious duty for those who cook to learn how to prepare healthful food in a variety of ways, so that it may be both palatable and healthful.”

Child Guidance, p. 373

Many pediatricians are not being trained to be health reformers

“A new survey found that half of the nation's pediatric residency programs fail to provide training on how to help prevent children and adolescents from taking up smoking, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The survey also showed that very few residency programs are training pediatricians to deal with the impact of parental smoking on children's lives.

‘Experts agree that pediatricians have an important opportunity to help prevent tobacco use by children early on, especially since cigarette smoking and other tobacco use are the number-one preventable causes of morbidity and mortality in our society,’ said Norman Hymowitz, Ph.D., researcher at the New Jersey Medical School and lead author of the survey. ‘What better time to train pediatricians for this than during their residencies?’

... ‘Besides helping to prevent children from taking up smoking, when parents repeatedly take their kids to the pediatrician's office because of ear, nose, and throat and respiratory illnesses, it is logical for the pediatrician to ask parents about their smoking history. But today's study indicates that this practice is not being widely encouraged among our

nation's pediatricians,’ Hymowitz said.

The survey is published in the December issue of Preventive Medicine.” *Join Together Online (11/7/2001)*

Cheese Is Number-One Source of Artery-Clogging Fat in American Diet

“WASHINGTON - ...Cheese consumption has almost tripled since 1970, making cheese the nation's biggest source of saturated fat.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average American eats 30 pounds of cheese a year. That compares to only 11 pounds in 1970.

‘Americans are eating far too much fatty cheese,’ said Margo Wootan, Nutrition Policy Director for CSPI (Center for Science in the Public Interest). ‘Unfortunately, it’s everywhere: on sandwiches, on lean chicken, on salads, and even on fries. And it’s doing even more damage to our hearts than beef or butter.’

‘Many people think of calcium-rich cheese as healthful, but it’s a dangerous trap,’ continued Wootan. ‘People would be better off getting their calcium from foods like fat-free (skim) or 1% milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese, or calcium-fortified orange juice.’

... ‘Heart disease is the leading cause of death for American men and women,’ said Dr. William E. Connor, professor of Medicine and Clinical Nutrition at the Oregon Health Sciences University. ‘Anything Americans can do to reduce their intake of saturated fat and cholesterol, such as cutting back on cheese, would lessen the risk of heart disease.’

‘Just one ounce of full-fat cheese can have as much as six grams of artery-clogging fat — a third of a day’s worth,’ said Wootan. ‘And an ounce isn’t much, just 1 1/2 slices of processed cheese, a 1 1/4-inch cube of cheddar or most other hard cheeses, or the cheese on a slice of a large pizza.’

In a letter to Secretary Tommy Thompson, CSPI urged the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to mount national campaigns to encourage Americans to eat less saturated fat — including less cheese — and more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The letter stated, ‘According to HHS’s estimates, between 310,000 and 580,000 Americans die prematurely every year due to poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle. Among the most important dietary factors is high intake of saturated fat.’

Center for Science in the Public Interest (February 6, 2001)

What money spent on liquor could do for the starving millions

“Students at Clemson University are taking part in a ‘Beer for Bread’ program by giving their beer money to charity, WYFF-TV reported Oct. 22.

The money raised though Beer for Bread helps buy food for those in need. ‘It's very easy for us to put containers out for people to give what money they might have spent on alcohol and give it to the folks that might need some food,’ said Clemson University Human Services Coordinator Stefani Goodenow.

The activity is one of several on campus planned for National Alcohol Awareness Week. The event is aimed at teaching students about the dangers of drinking.” *JTO Direct (October 26, 2001)*

“The cries of the starving millions in our world would soon be hushed if the money put into the tills of the liquor sellers were spent in alleviating the sufferings of humanity. But the evil is constantly increasing. The youth are being educated to love the vile stuff, and this is ruining them, soul and body.” *Temperance, p. 29*

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