

#### Ask the Doctor

### "Should I cut back on calcium?"

My sister says I'm overdoing it with my calcium supplements.
Can I get too much?

Yes! If you exceed the total A calcium recommendations -1,000 mg. per day for women ages 19-50, 1,200 mg. per day for those 51 and older-you may increase your risk of kidney stones, calcium deposits in your blood vessels and even heart attacks. The average woman gets at least 700 mg. of calcium daily from various dairy products, fortified juices, bony fish and cereals, so adding a multivitamin to your regimen should be sufficient. - JoAnn E. Manson, M.D., Harvard Medical School, Brigham

### "Are sprouts healthy to eat?"

I recently read that raw sprouts caused the latest E. coli outbreak. Are they still safe in salads?

and Women's Hospital, Boston

A Raw sprouts of any kind (including alfalfa, clover, radish and mung bean sprouts) are risky because they grow in water, which is a breeding ground for E. coli bacteria. Just washing sprouts might not completely remove bacteria. Certain groups are particularly at risk for illness, including seniors, young children or those with weakened immune systems; they should be especially careful to only eat thoroughly cooked sprouts.

 Robert E. Brackett, Ph.D., Institute for Food Safety and Health at Illinois Institute of Www. Technology, Bedford Park Natural Health

No more aches and pains!

Got a lot of aches and pains? You're not alone. An estimated 75 million of us are suffering weekly—often daily—with pain in our backs, necks and more. Fortunately, new research shows it's often possible to turn off the ache safely, easily and without medication! Get started by . . .

Ending tummy aches with peppermint tea

New research suggests sipping three cups of peppermint tea daily eases indigestion, bloating, dyspepsia and other chronic stomach woes in as little as one week. How? This soothing herb improves digestive function and reduces inflammation, says lead researcher Stuart Brierley, Ph.D.

## Easing arthritis pain with drunken raisins

It's true: Eating 20 gin-soaked golden raisins daily for one month, then nine daily after that, relieves arthritis pain for up to 70% of sufferers! The sulfur in golden raisins and the juniper extract in gin have anti-inflammatory properties. Raisins also contain resveratrol, an antioxidant that research shows significantly decreases cartilage destruction.

To do: In shallow bowl, cover raisins with gin; soak, uncovered, for several weeks until gin evaporates. Store in an airtight container.

### Nixing headaches with DLPA

Taking a daily 1,500 mg. dose of DLPA (a mix of two amino acids, sold in drugstores) halts headaches for up to 78% of women, research suggests. Doctors say these amino acids work together to boost levels of the brain's natural painkillers, called endorphins.

Minimizing muscle pain with ginger

Up to 63% of people with chronic muscle aches get relief by taking 500 mg. of ginger extract daily. Compounds in the spice shut down inflammation, soothing stiff, achy muscles the same way prescription meds do, but without any negative side effects, experts say.

# post-operative pain with sunshine

In one study, folks who'd had surgery felt far less discomfort when they spent their days in sunny rooms instead of gloomy ones. Sunlight triggers the release of the painkilling neurotransmitter serotonin, says Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D., author of *Pain-Free 1-2-3*.



Peppermint's soothing properties can ease chronic tummy woes in as little as one week!

#### Rx for hand burns!

If you regularly use an iron, curling iron or stove, you're bound to burn yourself once in a while. Cool an ouch under running water, then touch the fingertips of one hand to the fingertips of the other and press. New research suggests this simple trick cuts the pain as much as 64%! "Your brain can choose to ignore pain signals and, oddly, it will if you confuse it by joining your hands together so they feel like they're one," says lead researcher Marjolein Kammers, Ph.D.

—Brenda Kearns

Important: Check with your doctor before taking any new supplement.

### FEEL BETTER FASTE

### Got athlete's foot?

## Apply an antifungal!

Don't delay!

Athlete's foot is caused by a fungus that is easy to treat. "But if you wait too long, athlete's foot can spread to your toenails—and that infection requires a prescription antifungal," says Dominic J. Catanese, D.P.M., of New York City's Albert Einstein College of Medicine. One to try: Lotrimin AF, about \$10 in drugstores.



Put socks on first!

That way, when you're dressing you won't accidentally transfer an active infection to your underwear and from there to your groin area.

To get rid of the unsightly flaking, cracking and peeling skin, as well as the itch:





wearing shoes that you wore during a previous infection! Solution: "Spray the insides of your shoes with Lysol and allow them to air-dry in the sun," says Jonah Mullens, D.P.M., a podiatrist at Stanford University Hospital in Palo Alto, California.

## Keep it away with antiperspirant!

"Fungus thrives in moist environments, so if your feet tend to get very sweaty, roll an antiperspirant over your soles before you put your shoes on," says Dr. Mullens.

### More prevention tips

After bathing, dry your feet thoroughly—especially between the toes where athlete's foot tends to first appear.

Wear flip-flops in locker rooms, pools, communal showers and other public areas