

MEDS MAY HURT

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.

BODY, MIND and YOU

I recently came across two journal articles that linked some commonly-prescribed medications to an increasing prevalence of hip fracture and osteoporosis. My reason for sharing this information is to make you aware of some of the side effects associated with common drugs.

The first of these articles is from the Journal of the American Medical Association (Vol. 296, No. 24), which reported on the elevated risk of hip fractures with the long-term use of acid blocking drugs (proton pump inhibitors, such as Prilosec and Nexium).

This study showed a 59 percent increased risk if antacid medications are used for four years. There was a steady increase in hip-fracture rates the longer these drugs were used. Making things even worse is the fact that these drugs are so commonly prescribed.

I find that one out of every five patients who comes into my office

is on an antacid, and most have been for several years.

These drugs are effective at blocking hydrochloric acid production of the stomach. But, the consequence of blocking acid production is that it leads to poor mineral absorption and poor digestion. The depletion of the body's mineral store leads to the body using the largest source of minerals, the bones, to supply it with necessary minerals it needs. This leaching leads to brittle bones and eventually fractures.

The second article is from the Archives of Medicine (Vol. 167, No. 2) and found that daily use of the most common antidepressants – SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) – such as Prozac, Zoloft, Welbutron, etc., was found to result in a 200 percent increased risk of bone fractures. This study looked at patients 50 and older over five years.

In this study, daily SSRI use was found to be associated with a significantly increased risk of falling (2,100

percent increase, in fact) and a lowered bone mineral density of the hip and the spine. All of these effects were dose dependent, meaning the longer you took the medications, the more problems you may have with them. These are also a group of drugs that I find a large majority of patients are taking, and I don't think any of them were warned about these potential side effects.

In previous columns, I've discussed alternatives to acid blocking drugs, such as proper dietary changes, digestive enzymes and the use of botanicals such as licorice root. I have also written about natural anti-depressants, such as simply increasing your exercise or taking herbs such as St. John's Wort and the amino acids tryptophan and tyrosine.

So, if you are taking any of these medications you may want to sit down with the doctor that prescribed them to discuss some of these negative effects. I would also suggest visiting a naturopathic physician, who



may be able to help you get off some of these medications and onto more natural alternatives that are free of such side effects.

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HOLIDAY PEP

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas

The holidays are a time of celebration, and, *oh my*, how we celebrate! We eat, drink and indulge, and then end up feeling like bloated whales. In New England, I find that wearing sweatshirts and sweaters is the most popular method of hiding the extra pounds.

The truth is you don't have to let every party become your own personal eating contest. All it takes is flexibility, creativity and a new way of defining exercise.

It's tempting to ditch our workouts as the days fill up with holiday preparations, parties and whatnot. Exercise will help you deal with added stress and give you energy for everything you need to accomplish. It will also help you avoid gaining weight.

Don't worry about sticking to your usual routine, now is a great time to try a new one. All you need to do is make sure you have 12 to 20 minutes, stick with activities that

are easy to do at a moment's notice, and try to work as hard as you can in the time you have by keeping the intensity high. Here's a sample 12-minute workout to try at home:

- 0:00-1:00 – Warm up with a brisk walk (outside or around the house);
- 1:00-2:00 – Jumping jacks;
- 2:00-3:00 – Jump rope (pretend if you don't have a rope);
- 3:00-4:00 – Run as fast as you can (in place or outside);
- 4:00-5:00 – Ski hops: Stand with feet together, bend knees and jump a few feet to the right and then left – landing with bent knees;
- 5:00-6:00 – Alternate lunge in place;
- 6:00-7:00 – Walk as fast as you can;
- 7:00-8:00 – Jump rope again;
- 8:00-9:00 – Jumping jacks again;
- 9:00-10:00 – High-knees in place;
- 10:00-11:00 – Run as fast as you can again
- 11:00-12:00 – Walk around and

catch your breath.

To keep your metabolism high, make sure you hit the weights too. Here is a quick workout that should take no more than 20 minutes, three times a week. On Monday, work with lighter weights and shoot for 13-15 reps of each exercise; Wednesday, go with harder weights and 10-12 reps; Friday is 8-10 reps and heavy weights. For this workout, we're doing "super-sets," which means one right after the other with no rest.

- 1) Incline bench press with machine or dumbbells (two sets); Closed-grip assisted chin-ups, palms facing you (two sets); Rest (60 seconds)
- 2) Seated machine or cable rows (two sets, with no rest); Bent-over laterals rear-delt raise (two sets); Rest (60 seconds)
- 3) Seated incline hammer curls (two sets, no rest); Triceps dips, assisted machine or off a bench (two sets); Rest (60 seconds)
- 4) Lunges, holding dumbbells in



place (two sets, with no rest); Prone leg curls, or standing single-leg curls (two sets, no rest); Plie squats, holding one dumbbell between legs (two sets, with no rest); Calf raises (three sets); Rest (60 seconds).

This holiday season, consider smaller portions and skip the second plate. Don't forget about how easy it is to get a larger waistline.

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