

HealthTip

Feeding your hunger for information
about your health...

of the Month...

Brain Training for Mental Fitness

Older men and women who participated in one hour classes with computer skills and tests demonstrated long term (5 year) improvement in mental skills. For people age 73 on average, just 10 sessions... less time than it takes to stay physically fit... helped keep their brains sharp.

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Antibiotics Mostly Useless for Sinusitis

If you develop a mild sinus infection this year or even a moderately severe one, **antibiotics won't necessarily speed your recovery**, new research shows.

"In the vast majority of cases, rhinosinusitis is a self-limiting disease," said Dr. An De Sutter, of Ghent University Hospital in Belgium. "It can last 10 days or longer, but antibiotics do not influence the course of the disease."

In many cases, your best bet is to forgo antibiotics, rely on symptomatic treatments and wait for a natural recovery, De Sutter said.

De Sutter estimates that 50 percent to 70 percent of sinusitis patients are prescribed antibiotics. In the study, De Sutter and her colleagues looked at 300 patients with

mild to moderately severe sinusitis. They randomly assigned patients to receive either amoxicillin or a placebo, asked them to keep a symptom diary and observed them for 15 days.

The researchers found that the disease lasted as long in patients taking amoxicillin as it did in patients taking a placebo.

"We don't know for sure why antibiotic treatment seemed to have no effect on the duration of the illness," De Sutter said. "But there two possible explanations: Either the illness was not caused by a bacterial infection, or if they were, the patients' immune systems were able to overcome the infection just as quickly without antibiotics."

Happy St. Patricks day!

The Bottom Line...

One-Minute Three-Step Stroke Test Screening for a Stroke Diagnosis

Although a stroke is always a medical emergency and time lost equals brain cells and function lost, as many as 97 percent of American adults do not know the symptoms of a stroke. Researchers at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Medicine developed this one-minute, three-step stroke assessment test to enable bystanders and first line emergency responders to quickly screen for a possible stroke diagnosis.

Step 1: Ask person to "smile broadly, showing your teeth." (This "smile test" is to look for one-sided facial weakness or paralysis.)

Step 2: Ask person to close their eyes, raise their arms in front of them and hold them out for a count of ten.

(This is to test for arm or leg weakness or paralysis, dizziness, or loss of balance.)

Step 3: Ask person to repeat a simple phrase, such as "Don't cry over spilled milk." (This is check for difficulty speaking or understanding speech or basic instructions.)

This simple three-step test screens for the most common signs and symptoms of a stroke. Taking fast action will help improve the treatment and the outcome for stroke victims. The only approved medication to stop or reverse strokes must be given within three hours after the stroke begins. A stroke or suspected stroke is always a medical emergency and anyone exhibiting signs of a stroke should receive immediate medical attention.

This issue of the HealthTip of the Week is brought to you as a public service by...

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SPOTLIGHT

