

# DR. DAVID SINGER'S HEALTH REPORTS VOLUME 11 ISSUES 133-144

## ~ DISCLAIMER ~

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# HEALTH REPORT

VOLUME 11

ISSUE 133

## CASE STUDY: CHRONIC COUGH, ASTHMA HANDLED FOR GIRL WITH CHIROPRACTIC TREATMENT

The results achieved through Chiropractic treatment continue to be nothing short of amazing. In this case, a 7-year-old girl who had been suffering from asthma since age 2, now has a completely new lifestyle thanks entirely to the discovery of the cause and subsequent Chiropractic treatment.

A recent case study presented in the *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research* documented how Chiropractic treatment changed this young girl's life. Not only did her asthmatic problems lessen beginning with her first adjustment, but she was able to discontinue many of her medications.

The study noted that the girl had been diagnosed with asthma at age 4. Her mom reported that anything from dust to cold drafts could trigger an asthmatic attack. Medical treatment for this condition included using three different inhalers a total of 24 times each day. Additionally, the child suffered from a cough and persistent fevers. Medical prescriptions for these conditions required more than 10 other medications in an attempt to manage the problems. Coughing, wheezing and daily asthma attacks were the order of the day and prevented her from participating in physical activities.

The results the girl experienced almost immediately from Chiropractic treatment could be considered nothing short of phenomenal. Following a Chiropractic exam that showed the presence of vertebral subluxations (partial dislocations of the vertebral column), her care began. She received a total of 2-3 adjustments per week over a 3 week period.

The study noted that the girl experienced a noticeable reduction in her symptoms the evening following her very first adjustment when her coughing stopped. Over the course of the 3 weeks of treatment, her wheezing stopped and her chest tightness subsided. By the end of treatment, asthma attacks were no longer occurring. The mother also reported that at the same time the girl was able to increase her physical activity free of the usual asthma symptoms.

Three months following the girl's start of Chiropractic care, an examination was performed by the girl's medical doctor who documented her significant improvement in respiratory function. The pediatrician was elated with the progress, giving full credit to the medications. The girl's mother then explained that several of the medications had been discontinued and that the girl had received Chiropractic treatment. The child's doctor chose not to approve of the new treatment pattern and terminated his care.

In presenting their findings, the study authors encouraged Chiropractic examination for children and adults with these types of persistent health conditions. "Perhaps this case will encourage future testing and screening for subluxations which could potentially cause dyspoiesis (a disorder of this nature), resulting in a variety of symptoms that include asthma."

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## MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM KNOWLEDGE RANKS LOW FOR MDS, MED STUDENTS

Knowledge of the musculoskeletal system continues to be deficient in both working physicians and medical students. Many medical students, in particular, feel unprepared to deal with musculoskeletal complaints even though they rank learning to deal with such conditions to be of high importance.

The latest survey to reach this conclusion was conducted at Harvard Medical School. Charles S. Day, M.D. and colleagues did their work in analyzing 449 medical students during the 2005-2006 academic year. The researchers hoped to determine the level of importance students placed on musculoskeletal education in terms of their future careers, as well as their current level of confidence in performing musculoskeletal exams. A competency exam to assess a student's cognitive understanding of musculoskeletal medicine was also administered.

It is interesting to note that medical students rated musculoskeletal education to be of major importance. On the other hand, they gave an overall poor rating to the amount of curriculum time spent on the subject. Overall, the students did not feel adequately trained or informed to either examine the musculoskeletal system or to generate a differential diagnosis.

Exam scores were equally telling. The average score of all 2nd through 4th year medical students fell below the passing mark of 70 percent. Only percent of 3rd year students passed the exam, but 4th year students improved this mark to 26 percent passing. One ray of hope was that those 3rd and 4th year students who took musculoskeletal elective classes did significantly better than those who only attended the required classes.

A test to determine if fundamental knowledge of the musculoskeletal system carries over with doctors once they leave medical school and go into practice was recently administered through a University of Washington study. Here the scores of 92 physicians who took a test of musculoskeletal knowledge were examined. Results showed that more than half (59) of the participating doctors scored less than 70 percent. However, those doctors who took elective courses in this area scored higher than those who only took the required course load.

Both of these studies concluded that greater emphasis is needed on training in musculoskeletal conditions for students during their four years of medical school. Fortunately, Chiropractors are very well trained and extremely well versed in the diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions. Part of a medical doctor's schooling should include a full understanding of a Chiropractor's professional abilities so as to be able to quickly refer patients to the right doctor to bring about a speedy recovery.

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## **PRESSURE APPLIED TO ACUPUNCTURE POINTS BRINGS LONG-LASTING LOW BACK PAIN RELIEF**

When a person complains of low back pain, physical therapy is often included in the treatment. Now, based on the results of a recent study, simply applying Acupressure to a troubled area may bring very favorable results. Acupressure is the applying of pressure to the body with the thumbs or the forefingers to the same points that are stimulated in Acupuncture.

Low back pain is a common health problem that is experienced by a considerable percentage of the population worldwide. In previous studies, Acupressure had been shown to be effective in alleviating various types of pain, but little was known about its effect on low back pain.

In a recent survey published online by the *British Medical Journal*, Acupressure was found to be considerably more effective in bringing relief for low back pain than did physical therapy.

The study was conducted in Taiwan where 129 patients with chronic low back pain were recruited from an orthopedic clinic. Each of the participants completed a standard disability questionnaire prior to beginning treatment. Of the patients, 64 received Acupressure treatment for six sessions. The remaining 65 patients received physical therapy. The results of their treatments were measured immediately after the treatment program and again 6 months later.

Researchers found that the average disability score for the group receiving Acupressure was significantly lower than in the group that received physical therapy. In fact, Acupressure provided an 89% reduction in disability compared with the physical therapy group. Researchers found that this improvement continued on through 6 months. It was also noted in the study results that the benefits of Acupressure were also greater for such variables as “leg pain,” “pain interferes with normal work” and “days off from work or school.”

This study supports the conclusions of earlier studies involving the benefits of Acupressure for a variety of other health concerns. Acupressure may be useful for reducing pain, improving body function and reducing the level of disability from low back pain. Additionally, they found it important that it was not only a short-term benefit. Acupressure as applied to low back pain brought long-lasting relief.

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## GET A JUMP ON COLD, FLU SEASONS WITH IMMUNE SYSTEM ENHANCING ADJUSTMENTS

One of the many benefits of Chiropractic care is that it can provide excellent benefits toward fighting against and warding off the flu. Spinal adjustments provided by chiropractors have an excellent track record in increasing the immune function of the body and helping it to stay healthy – especially during cold and flu season.

The reason for this success is because Chiropractic works to increase the function of the immune system. It does so by correcting spinal abnormalities known as subluxations (minor dislocations of the vertebra). These subluxations are known to cause interference with the proper function of the nervous system by placing undue pressure on the nerves themselves. As the nervous system controls all bodily functions, including those of the immune system, Chiropractic adjustments go a long way toward contributing to overall health and wellness.

The interaction between the nervous and immune systems has been shown to be positively affected by Chiropractic adjustment. “Through research, we know that Chiropractic has beneficial effects on immunoglobulins (a naturally occurring antibody), B-lymphocytes (these are the white blood cells), pulmonary (of the lungs) function and other immune system processes,” said Dr. Matthew McCoy, who serves as the editor of the *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research*.

One such study tested the response of white blood cells as important infection fighters. When Chiropractic manipulation was applied to the middle of the back, it was found that white blood cells were present in significantly higher number than prior to the adjustment. What this study demonstrated was that the adjustment provided an “enhanced respiratory burst” that helped immune cells to destroy invading viruses and bacteria. In so doing, they provided greater resistance toward the invasion of the flu virus.

Another large study examined the overall improvement of people who had experienced Chiropractic care. A wide variety of benefits ensued, showing between 7 and 28 percent improvements to people suffering from spinal discomfort, fatigue, incidence of colds and flu, headaches, allergies and physical pains. Specifically of interest to cold and flu sufferers is that a 15% reduction in colds and flu was achieved by this group of 2,818 individuals who received regular Chiropractic care.

In addition to providing needed adjustments, chiropractors are concerned with the total well-being of the individual and educate their patients toward positive health and lifestyle practices. Getting ample rest, drinking adequate water, exercising regularly, choosing a proper diet and correctly using multivitamins and minerals are essential to staying resistant to colds and flu.

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## SENIOR ADULTS MAY EXTEND THEIR YEARS WITH AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Seniors who exercise regularly and enjoy an active lifestyle can have a direct and positive effect on their own life expectancy. Even though it is previously known that exercise programs produced positive results, a recent study now shows that seniors who are active in their daily routines get positive benefits from being in action. The results of the study were published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Researchers from the National Institute on Aging located in Bethesda, Maryland, studied the daily energy expenditure of a group of 302 high-functioning, community-dwelling seniors ranging from the age to 70 to 82. Their tracking measures were quite sophisticated in that they measured energy expenditure in terms of hydrogen and oxygen eliminated from the body as carbon dioxide. By measuring energy expenditure they were able to categorize the activity level of the individual.

All 302 participants were followed on average for a period of just over 6 years. During the time of the study, 55 participants died – 18.2% of the group. The researchers then compared the activity levels of all participants to see if there was a correlation between death rates and activity levels.

The study results showed that individuals with higher levels of activity energy expenditure were indeed associated with a lower risk of death. This information was achieved by categorizing participants into three activity groups. They ultimately determined that the risk of death for the group with the highest activity level was only 12.1%. The risk of death increased to 17.6% for those in the middle energy level. Worst off was the bottom activity level where the risk of death vaulted to 24.7%.

“Our study suggests that any activity energy expenditure in older adults can help lower mortality risks,” said the study authors who operated under the guidance of study leader Todd M. Manini, Ph.D. Exercise programs for seniors and getting out and taking walks are certainly well advised activities for persons of all ages, but especially seniors. Also, staying active around the home or with yard work and daily activities is advised, too, and verified by the results of this study. “Simply expending energy through any activity may influence survival in older adults,” said the researchers.

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## CHECKING FACIAL TEMPERATURES PROVIDES CLUES TO IMPORTANT ACUPOINTS

There may be an improved way to pick Acupuncture points than to simply follow the time honored locations developed over the long and successful history of the practice. Now the results of a new study show that introducing the modern technique of infrared thermography to diagnosis may help direct an acupuncturist to the most critical areas that need treatment.

Thermography is a technique where an infrared camera photographically portrays the body's surface temperature in picture form. Self-emanating infrared radiation from the body can then be used as a diagnostic method to point out pathological conditions and areas of the body that may need special attention.

For the purpose of a study, 60 persons who were suffering from facial paralysis were given an infrared thermogram of the face. The object was to detect points that an acupuncturist could treat. Points that registered a difference of over 0.5 degrees C from the healthy side of the face were selected and then treated with Acupuncture.

During the course of this specialized treatment, points to apply Acupuncture were re-determined by subsequent thermogram examination. Acupuncture was then administered to these newly determined points until the end of treatment. A control group of persons with facial paralysis included 120 persons who were treated at conventional Acupuncture points.

The result of this study showed quite conclusively that the cured and basically cured rate was 90 percent (54 cases) in the test group that received thermogram examinations. In the control group receiving traditional Acupuncture point treatment, the cure rate only reached 77.5 percent (93 cases). Researchers also pointed out that the test group received fewer sessions of Acupuncture and that the length of treatment time was of shorter duration.

It was the conclusion of researchers that Acupuncture treatment delivered at acupoints selected by thermogram had a higher cure rate and a shorter duration of treatment than did Acupuncture applied only at conventional treatment points. This modernized method of selecting thermogram-aided acupoints certainly showed some beneficial results. More studies using this technique will be welcomed and should be considered in light of the enhanced successes achieved with this unique process.

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## MAKE WELLNESS A TOP PRIORITY IN 2008

With all of the media attention focusing on wellness these days and the bombardment of information coming across the Internet, a concise listing of the most important topics to consider might help a person to wade through the avalanche of data. The following is such a concise report provided by HealthandWellness.com. Here are “Eight Keys to Health and Wellness for 2008:”

- ❖ **Get Plenty of Sleep!** Sleeping well improves alertness, vitality, decision-making and overall health and fitness. It appears as number one on the list because it is right up there in terms of importance with good diet and ample exercise. All three of these are equally important for good health.
- ❖ **Be Health Proactive!** This simply means keeping good tabs on overall health as well as getting regular check ups and screenings to detect problems.
- ❖ **Exercise!** Make strength, balance and flexibility a key part of a fitness program. If extra motivation is needed, join a group or fitness club to help ensure regular activity.
- ❖ **Use Complementary and Alternative Medicine.** Make use of the services of healthcare providers who specialize in wellness and overall health of the individual. The services of chiropractors and acupuncturists are definitely included in this area.
- ❖ **Improve Self-Motivation.** This is key to the field of wellness. It’s important to know there is a vital relationship between how a person thinks in terms of improving their overall well-being and the results that show up in a healthier body. Improve healthy thinking and a healthy body may follow.
- ❖ **Be Food Smart!** Know more about food and what goes into the body. This starts with doing a better job of getting educated about food contents. Learn to read grocery labels and shop for more nutritious foods.
- ❖ **Learn How to Keep the Pounds Off.** This is especially true when dining out. Remember that eating restaurant food and gaining weight do not have to be synonymous. Know what the healthy choices are, even in fast food establishments.
- ❖ **Walk for Wellness!** Going out and taking a walk may be the easiest path to follow for improved health and fitness, yet it is often overlooked as a good means of getting exercise and staying fit. Do this on a machine at a club or by just taking a walk around the block. Doing the program with a friend or taking a pet for a walk is often a very successful way to get this done.

It all sounds pretty simple, doesn’t it? Eat healthy. Order wisely when dining out. Get some exercise, with walking as a big component of any program. Get a healthy amount of sleep. Learn more about the services of alternative medicine and wellness providers to help improve overall health. And, most important is taking charge of a healthy plan and then staying motivated to do so. These actions will lead to an advanced level of health, fitness and wellness for the rest of 2008 and well beyond.

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## HIGH PROFILE MIX-UP BRINGS QUICK RESPONSE

It's very interesting to note how quickly medical institutions and drug companies respond when a medical error involves a high profile personality. This is certainly true in the highly publicized case involving infant twins of Hollywood movie star Dennis Quaid and his wife when the children were subjected to what could have been a life threatening incident.

The location of the error was the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. The case involves an incorrect dosage of heparin while delivering intravenous medication to infant twins of Quaid and his wife Kimberly. Here is precisely what occurred via a hospital press release:

“On November 18, three patients who were receiving intravenous medications as part of their treatment had their IV catheters flushed with a solution containing a higher concentration of heparin (a medication used to keep IV catheters from clotting) than normal protocol. As a result of a preventable error, the patients' IV catheters were flushed with heparin from vials containing a concentration of 10,000 units per milliliter instead of from vials containing a concentration of 10 units per milliliter.”

Fortunately, in this case, there was no immediate or permanent harm caused to the infants or to the other person who received this elevated dosage of heparin. However, with the entire contingent of media swarming around the case and the impending threat of a lawsuit, both the medical center and the maker of the drug, Baxter Healthcare Corporation, sprung into action.

Basically, the center's investigation into the foul up traced the heparin from the center's pharmacy to patient delivery. It started when incorrect vials of the higher concentration of the medication mistakenly left the pharmacy and then went through 3 more levels of handling where the strength was never verified, contrary to medical center policy. As a result, some new policies were written and several employees were suspended and face possible disciplinary action.

Within weeks of this medical error, Baxter made some announcements, too. They now plan to put more effort into easier to read and identify drug labeling with heparin leading the way. “As one of the top five high alert medications as designated by the Institute of Safe Medication Practices, heparin sodium injection, a commonly used anticoagulant, is the first medication offered with a new enhanced label. The label features an increase of 20 percent font size, a unique color combination and a large red cautionary tear-off label.”

“Incorrect drug administration accounts for the largest proportion of harmful medication errors,” Baxter said in a company release. “Eight high alert products, including insulin, morphine and heparin were involved in more than 31 percent of all medication errors that caused harm to patients.”

“According to the Institute of Medicine, 1.5 million Americans are injured each year from medication errors in hospitals, nursing homes and outpatient clinics/surgery centers. An estimated 7,000 Americans die each year as a result of medication errors,” said the Baxter release.

The Quaid family has a \$50,000 lawsuit currently pending against Baxter.

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## VYTORIN TEST SHOWS NO BENEFIT OVER LOWER COST DRUG, RESULTS SUPPRESSED

In the past few weeks, it has been made known that drug companies Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals have been suppressing the results of an important investigation into the effectiveness of their cholesterol reducing products. As a result, Senator Chuck Grassley (Iowa), a ranking member of the Committee on Finance, has raised some important questions to the drug makers regarding their failure to release results of the study and how this affected charges to the federal Medicaid program.

Both Merck/Schering-Plough recently released results of a study named ENHANCE. The purpose of this trial was to determine if the drug trade named Vytorin performed as well or better than lower priced generic statin drugs to reduce cholesterol levels. It has been reported that the companies have known the results of the study for 2 years but have not released the data until now.

Vytorin is a combination of two separate drugs in pill form aimed at controlling cholesterol in two ways. One of these drugs is known as an ezetimibe. This substance is aimed at controlling cholesterol levels by decreasing cholesterol absorption in the intestines. In theory, an ezetimibe drug should work to reduce plaque build-up in the arteries because the body will not absorb reduced levels of cholesterol from food. The second drug involved is known as a simvastatin. This drug functions by blocking an enzyme that is necessary for the body to make cholesterol and in so doing it is aimed at preventing cardiovascular disease from occurring.

The ENHANCE study involved testing Vytorin against a generic statin drug on 720 people who were known to have high levels of cholesterol production in their families. The test was conducted over a 2-year period. Analysis was done to determine the amount of plaque growth differences on artery walls between those taking Vytorin and subjects using the generic statin drug.

The result of the study recently announced by Merck and Schering-Plough is that, "There was no statistically significant difference between treatment groups." This is opposite of what the drug makers had hoped for and predicted.

The announcement drew a raft of concern in the media, which has now extended to Congress with Senator Grassley leading the way in calling for an explanation. This does not stem from a concern for patient safety as there were no adverse effects reported as a result of test subjects taking Vytorin. It has to do with the alleged fact that Merck/Schering-Plough knew the results of this study some 2 years ago and has been suppressing the results from the public during that entire time. The outrage has all to do with money.

"In Iowa City," said Sen. Grassley, "generic simvastatin costs \$54.54 for a month's supply while Vytorin costs \$112.46. It's fair to assume the public would have benefited from knowing that a less expensive drug works just as well. Instead, people in Iowa and elsewhere paid more for nearly 2 years while industry leaders sat on a scientific study that would have revealed this information." The Senator is also interested because during this 2-year period the Medicaid program has been paying for the higher priced Vytorin and this has cost taxpayers a good deal of money.

It is estimated that Merck/Schering-Plough sold an estimated \$5 Billion worth of Zetia and Vytorin during this time. These are both ezetimibe drugs produced and sold by these companies.

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## FDA APPROVES STILL MORE PAIN MEDICATION

For decades, chiropractors and acupuncturists have been providing successful treatments for the symptoms of Fibromyalgia. Study after study has shown that an overall wellness program that included Chiropractic adjustments and acupuncture treatments brought relief to individuals suffering from discomfort associated with the problem. Now, however, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has determined that Fibromyalgia may be treated with the drug Lyrica, which recently received government approval.

Fibromyalgia is a disorder that is characterized by chronic aches and tenderness in the muscles, fatigue and sleep problems. Pain usually occurs in the neck, shoulders, back, hands and pelvis. While there is no permanent damage to the joints or muscles associated with it, the pain it brings can be quite intense and difficult to live with. It is estimated that between 3 to 6 million people in the United States suffer from it each year. Statistics show that more women than men are affected, typically starting in early-to-middle adulthood.

It is interesting to note from the FDA commentary on Lyrica that while some test patients experienced a lessening of pain, not all experienced relief from the product. According to Steven Galson, M.D., the director of FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, "Consumers should understand that some patients did not experience benefit in clinical trials. We still have more progress to make for treatment of this disorder."

Also interesting is that it was approved even though the maker of the drug, Pfizer Inc., and the FDA were not able to provide detailed information of just how it works. According to the FDA, "Individuals with Fibromyalgia have been shown to experience pain differently from other people. Studies have shown that such patients have decreased pain after taking Lyrica, but the mechanism by which Lyrica produces such an effect is unknown."

Finally, the FDA included the following warning to people using Lyrica: "The most common side effects of Lyrica include mild-to-moderate dizziness and sleepiness. Blurred vision, weight gain, dry mouth, and swelling of the hands and feet also were reported in clinical trials. The side effects appeared to be dose-related. Lyrica can impair motor function and cause problems with concentration and attention. FDA advises that patients talk to their doctor or other healthcare professional about whether use of Lyrica may impair their ability to drive."

Also interesting is that the FDA made no mention of possible alternative methods for treating Fibromyalgia symptoms. These would include a healthy diet, adequate rest, exercise, stretching of affected areas, physical therapy, Chiropractic adjustments or Acupuncture treatments. It's also noteworthy that this drug was originally targeted toward handling nerve pain associated with diabetes. When its approval was declined, it was retargeted toward Fibromyalgia pain and thus received FDA approval.

Persons suffering from the symptoms of Fibromyalgia should be thoroughly examined by a chiropractor and/or an acupuncturist given healthy treatment options. This should be done long before considering a drug that showed marginal test results and requires a slew of FDA warnings to consumers.

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## SELECTIVE REPORTING OF DRUG TRIALS EXAGGERATES EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTIDEPRESSANTS

What many people have been suspecting all along with regards to the accurate reporting of drug testing was brought to light in the January issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Drug companies have been engaging in selective reporting of antidepressant drug trials and, by doing so, have been exaggerating the effectiveness of these products.

The comprehensive study examined reviews from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for trials of 12 widely prescribed antidepressant drugs approved between 1981 and 2004. A total of 12,564 patients were involved. In addition, researchers also conducted a systematic literature search to identify whether results of studies had been published in any other medical journals. For those that were published, the researchers continued on to determine if the published versions of the results matched the FDA's version of the results.

Basically, what researchers found was that the publishing of results and how the results were reported depended entirely on the outcome of each trial. This information comes from Erick Turner, M.D., who is an assistant professor of psychiatry, physiology and pharmacology at Oregon Health & Science University and the Medical Director of the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center's Mood Disorders Program.

Dr. Turner and his group found that according to the published literature, nearly all of the studies conducted (94%) had positive treatment results. This figure varies considerably from data provided to the FDA which showed, in fact, that only about half of the studies (51%) had positive results.

Unsurprisingly, drug companies were found to be very selective in the studies they did publish and were found to engage in deceptive and inaccurate reporting as well. Positive studies, with one exception, were all published. Additionally, 33 of 36 studies that were not positive were either not published or published deceptively as if they were positive, the researchers found. These 33 studies involved 5,212 patients.

"Selective publication can lead doctors and patients to believe drugs are more effective than they really are, which can influence prescribing decisions," said Dr. Turner. While the doctor did mention that a failure of a study author or sponsor to submit a non-positive manuscript or an editor's decision not to publish it could have some affect on the process, there was very clear bias in the reporting of some findings and failure to report others. "Doctors and patients must have access to evidence that is complete and unbiased when they are weighing the risks and the benefits of treatment," he said.

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## FDA: NO COUGH & COLD MEDICINE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 2

Three months after an advisory committee of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommended against Over-the-Counter cough and cold products for children, the FDA has officially made it certain:

“FDA has completed its review of information about the safety of over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold medicines in infants and children under 2 years of age. FDA is recommending that these drugs not be used to treat infants and children under 2 years of age because serious and potentially life-threatening side effects can occur,” said the FDA in a Public Health Advisory Jan. 17, 2008.

Many of the concerns of cough and cold medications came to public attention around the time of the FDA’s Nonprescription Drugs Advisory Committee meetings on October 18 and 19, 2007. During these two days of discussions the group scrutinized the use of OTC drugs for children. The committee concluded that cold medicines have no effective use in children.

It is interesting to note that one week prior to this committee meeting, most major manufacturers of cold and cough medicines for children began a campaign of their own to pull all of these medications from store shelves. Only a few manufacturers continued to sell these products through November. The most recent FDA Advisory made mention of the fact that pharmaceutical companies had voluntarily withdrawn these products in advance of the committee meeting.

The FDA Advisory committee had also voted in October to recommend that OTC medicines not be used in children who are between the age of 2 and 5. The current Public Health Advisory did not take action in regard to children over the age of two, but did state the following: “FDA has not completed its review of information about the safety of OTC cough and cold medicines in children 2 through 11 years of age. We are aware of reports of serious side effects from cough and cold medicines in children 2 years of age and older. FDA is committed to completing its comprehensive and thorough review of the safety of OTC cough and cold medicines in children 2 years of age and older as quickly as possible and expects to communicate our recommendations to the public in the near future.”

In the meantime, the FDA suggested some of the following measures to parents and caregivers with regard to the use of these medicines in children over 2 years age:

- Checking the “active ingredients” section of the DRUG FACTS label and understand what symptoms each active ingredient is intended to treat.
- Being very careful if you are giving more than one OTC medicine to a child to avoid giving too much of an “active ingredient” or conflicting ingredients.
- Carefully follow the directions in the DRUG FACTS part of the label.
- Only using the measuring spoons or cups that come with the medicine or those made specially for measuring drugs.
- Not using these products to sedate your child or make children sleepy.
- Call a physician, pharmacist, or healthcare professional if you have questions about using medicines in children 2 years of age and older.