

# To Your Health



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## Laptop Computers Can Give Thighs "Toasted Skin Syndrome"

They're called laptop computers, so you are supposed to place them on your lap – but sometimes at a price. Placing a laptop on your thighs for extended periods, especially if there is direct skin contact, could give you a nasty rash, medically known as *erythema ab igne*, according to a report published in the medical journal *Pediatrics*.

The underside of a laptop is much warmer than many people realize – often above 122° F. That's enough heat, especially if exposure is sustained and onto bare skin, to cause a rash to eventually develop. The skin develops a mild red rash, often blotchy. The skin and underlying tissue may become thinner, and lesions may develop. In some cases the patient may experience mild itchiness and a burning sensation. Often it may go unnoticed until the person sees it.

It used to be more common among the elderly, before central heating, when people would sit very close to fires or electric heaters, or use hot water bottles. When caused by a laptop computer, the authors say the signs always appear on the thighs. It is believed the heat source is the optical drive, the battery, or the computer's ventilation fan.

Most experts agree that this laptop rash should not cause any long-term ill effects or lead to complications.

## New Warnings about Children's Medications

### Child Liquid Medications Have Inconsistent Instructions and Measuring Devices

Over half of all American children are exposed to at least one medication in any given week - over half are Over the Counter (OTC) medications with inconsistent or confusing labels and measuring devices. Parents are at risk of getting the dosage wrong because of these inconsistencies.

According to the American Medical Association, a study of the 200 best-selling childhood medications, including those for coughs, colds and allergies had "*high levels of variability and inconsistencies*" in their labeling and measuring devices.

- Only 74% had a standardized measuring device.
- 98% of the standardized measuring devices had at least 1 inconsistency between the labeled instructions and the device.
- 24.3% did not have the necessary markings
- Of all the labels that had abbreviations in them, 163 did not define at least one of them.

Parents and all individuals involved in childcare need to be extremely careful. As always, if you have any questions, consult your Pharmacist.

### Candy-Like Cough Capsules May Pose Serious Risk to Young Children

The FDA announced that accidental ingestion of Benzonatate by children younger than 10 years old can result in serious adverse affects, or death. Benzonatate – a round, liquid-filled gelatin capsule – is approved for symptomatic relief of cough in children older than 10 years of age, but may represent a danger to younger children because of its candy-like appearance.

The FDA identified 31 cases of overdose associated with Benzonatate between 1982 and May 2010. 7 cases were in children younger than 10 years old. 5 ingestions of as little as 1 capsule resulted in death in children younger than 3 years old. Two patients, aged 12 months and 4 years, were hospitalized but survived.

If a child accidentally ingests Benzonatate, parents and caretakers are advised to call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 and seek immediate medical attention.

### Walking Maintains Brain Volume Prevents Cognitive Impairment

Walking at least 6 miles per week appears to maintain brain volume and preserve memory in old age, according to new research from the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They found that walking as little as 1 mile a day is related to increased brain volume lasting as long as 9 years later, and decreased dementia lasting as long as 13 years later.

299 dementia-free people – with a mean age of 78 – were assessed for physical activity, and measured by the number of blocks they walked in a week. Nine years later, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans were used to measure brain size. Four years after that, the participants were tested for cognitive impairment and dementia. The researchers found that participants who walked at least 72 blocks — approximately 6 to 9 miles — per week had more gray matter than people who walked less. Greater gray matter volume with physical activity was associated with a 2-fold reduced risk for cognitive impairment.

### Extended-Release Naltrexone Reduces Opiate Use

A once-monthly injection of naltrexone was generally well tolerated and beat out placebo in reducing opiate use and decreasing opiate cravings in opiate-dependent patients, new research suggests. The results of the 250-patient study were presented at the American Psychiatric Association (APA) 2010 Annual Meeting.

According to the study, the number of Americans addicted to prescription opiates and heroin has more than doubled since 2000. What's driving this increase? About 20% is attributable to heroin. The much larger problem is addiction to prescription drugs. Despite currently available treatments, more than half of the 1.3 million Americans suffering from opiate dependence remain untreated, and the global disease burden is growing. Extended-release naltrexone appears to offer an important alternative treatment strategy that addresses the obstacle of poor patient adherence.

Extended-release naltrexone was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2006 for treating alcohol dependence in adults who have completed detoxification treatment. The FDA recently designated a new drug application for extended-release naltrexone for opiate addiction as a priority review.

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### Low-Dose Aspirin May Protect Against Colorectal Cancer

Previous studies have shown that aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) lower colorectal cancer (CRC) risk. However, the lowest effective NSAID dose, treatment duration, and effects on survival had not been defined.

Now, researchers at the University of Edinburgh have explored the relationship between NSAID dose and duration, CRC risk and overall CRC-specific survival in a large population-based control study. Participants underwent a complete medical history, including a dietary assessment, and their height and weight were measured. This is the first study to demonstrate a protective effect against CRC associated with the lowest dose of aspirin (75 mg per day) after only 5 years use in the general population.

NSAID use was defined as taking more than 4 tablets per week for more than 1 month, and was further broken down into three sub-groups:

- Low-dose aspirin (75 mg)
- Non-aspirin NSAIDs
- Any NSAID.

A reduced risk for colorectal cancer, seen in low-dose aspirin users was apparent after only a year and was greater with increased duration of use. Use of any NSAID or non-aspirin NSAIDs was also associated with lower colorectal cancer risk. Doses of aspirin of more than 525 mg per day reduced the risk for colorectal cancer by 34%. Users of analgesics other than NSAIDs did not experience a lower risk for colorectal cancer.

The researchers concluded that high aspirin doses are not required for protection against CRC and that while protection increased with duration of use, effects are apparent within 5 years. Effects can be apparent as early as 1 year, but increase with time up to 10 years. Moreover, the results are applicable to the general population and not just high-risk groups.



### Release Naltrexone Reduces Opioid Use (Continued from Page 2 Col. 1)

Opiate addiction is typically treated with substitution therapy, typically with methadone or buprenorphine – agonist medications that bind to opiate receptors and mimic the drug's effects. This approach carries a host of problems, including access, acceptability, diversion, illicit use, and overdose deaths. In contrast, naltrexone, including the oral formulation, is an opiate antagonist, preventing opiates from binding to receptor sites. As a result, there is less potential for addiction, and the once-monthly formulation addresses the added obstacle of adherence.

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### Hope For Simple Urine Test For Autism

Children with autism have a different chemical fingerprint in their urine than non-autistic children, according to new research. These findings could ultimately lead to a simple urine test to determine whether or not a young child has autism.

People with autism have a range of different symptoms, but they commonly experience problems with communication and social skills, such as understanding other people's emotions and making conversation and eye contact. People with autism are also known to suffer from gastrointestinal disorders and they have a different makeup of bacteria in their guts from non-autistic people.

The new research shows that it is possible to distinguish between autistic and non-autistic children by looking at the by-products of gut bacteria and the body's metabolic processes in the children's urine. The distinctive urinary metabolic fingerprint for autism identified in the study could form the basis of a non-invasive test that might help diagnose autism earlier. This would enable autistic children to receive assistance, such as advanced behavioral therapy, earlier in their development than is currently possible.

Early intervention can greatly improve the progress of children with autism but it is currently difficult to establish a firm diagnosis when children are less than 18 months of age, although it is likely that changes may occur much earlier than this.

The researchers suggest that their new understanding of the makeup of bacteria in autistic children's guts could also help scientists to develop treatments to tackle autistic people's gastrointestinal problems.