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Trouble with Turtles

The recent spread of salmonella throughout the country has many cautious about what they eat. Salmonella infection can be caused by eating foods that have been contaminated with feces. Salmonella live in the intestines of humans and animals. This is why it is important to wash and cook food thoroughly to decrease contamination. It is also crucial that everyone wash their hands after using the restroom before coming in contact with food to prevent contamination.

Turtles, reptiles, and some amphibians are also a source of salmonella. The bacteria lie on the outer shell and skin surfaces. Even by just coming in contact with their environment can put people at risk for salmonella infection. Turtles are of the biggest concern, because many people keep them as pets. Children, along with elderly and those with lowered immune system functioning, are at the greatest risk of infection. Children tend to put turtles in their mouth or play in the turtle tank water and then put their hands in their mouth. Thus, in 1975, the FDA banned the sale of small turtles.

Symptoms of salmonella infection include diarrhea, fever, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and headache. Symptoms normally appear six to 72 hours after infection and may persist for one week. Most of these infections resolve on their own, but some people may require hospitalization. The FDA advises those with pet turtles to not clean the tank in the kitchen sink. When cleaning the tank, make sure to disinfect the area after cleaning. Above all, the best way to decrease the risk of a salmonella infection is to thoroughly wash hands with soap and water. To read more information regarding this topic, visit the FDA's website: <http://www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/turtles012508.html>.

Summer Sun and Stars...The New SPF Labeling

Do you ever find yourself standing in front of the wall of sunscreen trying to figure out which one is best for you? The FDA has proposed a new labeling system in hopes to help make this decision easier for the consumers. The current labeling system is based on SPF factors. SPF stands for "Sunburn Protection Factor". This factor is based on the time consumers should be protected from UVB radiation, when the sunscreen is applied correctly. UVB radiation from the sun is what causes burning. The new proposal will provide a UVA rating. UVA radiation is what causes tanning. Both UVA and UVB radiation can cause skin damage.

The new proposed labeling consists of four stars. The label will be found near the current SPF label. When one star is filled in on the label, this represents low protection from UVA radiation. When all four stars are filled in on the label, this represents the highest UVA radiation protection available OTC. The FDA hopes this will provide extra information to the consumer, in hopes to make their decision easier when choosing the best sunscreen for their skin. This new labeling is not mandatory yet; the FDA is still working on details and receiving comments regarding the proposal.

Although applying sunscreen is necessary when enjoying the nice summer weather, it is necessary to take other precautions as well. Limit your exposure to the sun and try to avoid the peak hours of the sun's radiation. Be sure to wear protective clothing when you can not avoid the sun's rays. Remember to reapply sunscreen while outside. Hopefully with this new proposal and other precautions, everyone can enjoy the great summer weather without the pain and trouble of sunburn. If you are interested in reading more about the FDA's proposal, visit their website at: <http://www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/>



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sunscreen082307.html.

You Got Burned, Now What? How to Relieve the Burn

Did you forget to reapply that sunscreen and now your suffering from intense sunburn? Lucky for you, there are a few things that you can do to self-treat your pain.

Over-the-counter pain relievers such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, etc.), or acetaminophen (Tylenol) should help decrease your pain. Aspirin and ibuprofen also have anti-inflammatory action that may help decrease any swelling that might occur.

Aloe vera gel is a common topical remedy providing a cool, soothing sensation to the skin. Caution should be advised though to aloe vera gels that contain topical anesthetics ("-caine" products). Therapy with these products can cause further skin irritation and possibly lead to the development of an allergic reaction.

Moisturizing lotion should be applied to keep the skin moist. This will not prevent peeling or blistering from occurring. Some physicians may also recommend hydrocortisone cream to help with the pain and swelling.

Cold compresses or cool baths may provide extra relief.

It is important to not use products containing petroleum or butter on sunburn. These products will slow healing and may cause further pain. If your sunburn results in a large amount of blisters or a high grade pain or fever, seek medical care for further treatment. Make sure to drink plenty of water after developing sunburn to prevent dehydration. Most importantly, remember to cover up, use and reapply sunscreen your next trip in the sun to prevent further damage to the skin.

LD-HRT aids BMD

Estrogen deficiency is a key factor in the cause of postmenopausal osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a disease of the bone that results in decreased bone mineral density (BMD), which

may result in fractures. Conventional estrogen replacement therapy has been shown to provide beneficial prevention in osteoporosis development. However, this therapy does have adverse side effects, such as vaginal bleeding or breast tenderness. This therapy also has been associated with unfavorable risks, such as breast cancer development and stroke.

New studies have shown that low dose hormone replacement therapy (LD-HRT) still provides adequate protection against bone loss. There is even evidence of prevention with ultra-low dose hormone replacement therapy (ultra-LD-HRT). These lowered doses prevent the stimulation of estrogen receptors in the breast and endometrial areas; decreasing the unwanted side effects and lowers the risks of therapy. Results from several studies have shown an increase in bone mineral density in the spine and femoral neck regions. These are the regions where most fractures occur in those who have osteoporosis.

An example of conventional dosing of estrogen therapy consists of 1mg of 17 β -estradiol or 0.625mg of conjugated equine estrogen daily. Low dose hormone replacement therapy dosing is about half of the conventional dosing; 0.3mg of conjugated equine estrogen and 2.5 mg of medroxyprogesterone acetate daily or 0.5mg of 17 β -estradiol daily. An example of ultra-low dose hormone replacement therapy is 0.25mg of 17 β -estradiol daily. With each of these examples, calcium and vitamin D therapy is added as supplements to aid in bone density formation. Preventing osteoporosis development may be easier than trying to fix the problems that result later on in life. Patients should weigh the risks versus the benefits before beginning therapy and discuss with their physician or pharmacist any concerns they may have.

Reference:

Prestwood KM, Kenny AM, Kleppinger A, Kulldorff M. Ultralow-Dose Micronized 17 β -estradiol and Bone Density and Bone Metabolism in Older Women. *JAMA* 2003;290(8):1042-1048.