

Smellier is better

When shopping for onions, consider the dark red/purple, stronger-tasting varieties. The strong taste and smell come from antioxidant compounds called polyphenols (including flavonoids), which may reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases, according to a report in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry. Mild white and yellow onions don't have as much of these compounds as dark-colored ones.

Shallots (green onions) though milder in flavour, are an exception.

**PAIN IN THE GUT**

How to keep away from gallstones

People with diabetes are at higher risk for developing gallstones

TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

You have a sharp, steady ache in your upper abdomen. It strikes right after you eat. It wakes you up at night. You go to the doctor thinking that you have got a bad case of indigestion. Turns out, you have got gallstones.

Many factors can increase your risk of developing this belching-inducing, bloat-causing condition, including obesity, increased estrogen levels caused by pregnancy, hormone replacement therapy (HRT), and birth control pills. You are also more at risk if you are a woman, over the age of 50, if you are experienced rapid weight loss, or if you take the cholesterol-lowering drugs. And people with diabetes are more than twice as likely as the general population to develop gallstones.

What are they and where do they come from?

The gallbladder is a small, pear-shaped organ that is found below your liver. It is connected to the liver and small intestine by a series of tube-like structures called duct. The gallbladder's job is to store and concentrate bile, which is a complex fluid that helps aid the digestion and absorption of fats. When we eat, the gallbladder releases this bile through a duct to small intestine to help absorb fat.

Gallstones form when substances in the bile, such as cholesterol and bilirubin (the substance that gives bile its pigment), harden into rock-like particles. They can be as small as a grain of

sand or as large as a golf ball. There are two types of gallstones – cholesterol stones, which make up 80 per cent of gallstone cases, and pigment stones, which account for the other 20 per cent. People with diabetes usually have cholesterol stones.

"There is a longstanding connection to obesity, but even beyond that there seems to be something about diabetes that

squeeze out as much as it should. Whatever the reason, people with diabetes should know what gallstones are, what happens when you get them, and how to treat them.

Management

Most people with gallstones don't have symptoms and may never develop any. But sometimes those stones get restless and

under the right shoulder. Attacks usually last for at least 30 minutes, but they can also go on for hours or even days. You may also have nausea, bloating, indigestion, and excess gas.

Repeated attacks or pain that lasts for days may be an indication that the gallbladder is becoming inflamed. People with diabetes are more likely to develop inflammation, which can quickly

gallstones attacks once in a while – months or even years apart – and about a third of those who have an attack don't experience one again. These people are advised to eat a low-fat diet to avoid future attack.

For those who have more frequent attacks, and who experience regular pain and nausea, the most common treatment is removal of the gallbladder. Once it is out, the liver compensates by sending bile directly to the small intestine. While some cases require open abdominal surgery, most often the operation can be done laparoscopically. In laparoscopic procedures, the surgeon makes several small incisions (instead of one large one) through which s/he operates, using special small instruments and a camera to view the operating field.

There are other treatments for people who routinely suffer from gallstones, such as medications or shock wave therapy, but neither of these treatments is as effective as surgery. Also, if gallbladder is left in place, it is likely that the stones will recur.

Prevention

While there is no surefire way to avoid developing gallstones, you can reduce the risk. Maintain a healthy weight. If you diet, make sure not to lose pounds too quickly – fasting diets and those allowing few calories.

Listen to your body. Have any unusual pain checked out. Treating symptomatic gallstones as early as possible greatly reduces the risk of complications.

Alcohol consumption: More risk than benefit

DR MINATI ADHIKARY

Alcohol is a small, water soluble molecule that is relatively slowly absorbed from the stomach, more rapidly absorbed from the small intestine, and freely distributed throughout the body. Alcoholic drinks are a major source of energy, for example, six pints of beer contain about 500 kcal and half a liter of whisky contains 1650 kcal. The daily energy requirement for a moderately active man is 3000 kcal and for a woman is 2200 kcal.

Alcohol is a sedative and mild anaesthetic. It is believed to activate the pleasure or reward centres in the brain by triggering release of neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin. Alcohol produces a sense of well-being, relaxation and euphoria.

These feelings are accompanied by physiological changes such as flushing, sweating, tachycardia (rapid beating of the heart), and increase in blood pressure. The kidneys secrete more urine. Increasing consumption leads to a state of intoxication, which depends on the amount of drink and previous experience of drinking. Even at a low blood concentration of around 30mg/100ml, the risk of unintentional injury is higher than in the absence of alcohol. In a simulated driving test, for example, bus drivers with a blood alcohol concentration of 50mg/100ml thought they could drive through obstacles that were too narrow for their vehicles.

People become garrulous, elated, and aggressive at concentration above 100mg/100ml, and then may stop drinking as drowsiness supervenes. Hangover includes insomnia, nocturia (passing abnormally large quantity of urine during the night), tiredness, nausea and headache. If drinking continues, slurred speech and unsteadiness are likely at around 200mg/100ml, and loss of consciousness may result. Concentrations above 400mg/100ml commonly are fatal as a result of ventricular fibrillation, the brain, which when you drink is



literally bathed in alcohol, is now being found by medical experts to function less well in case of heavy drinkers.

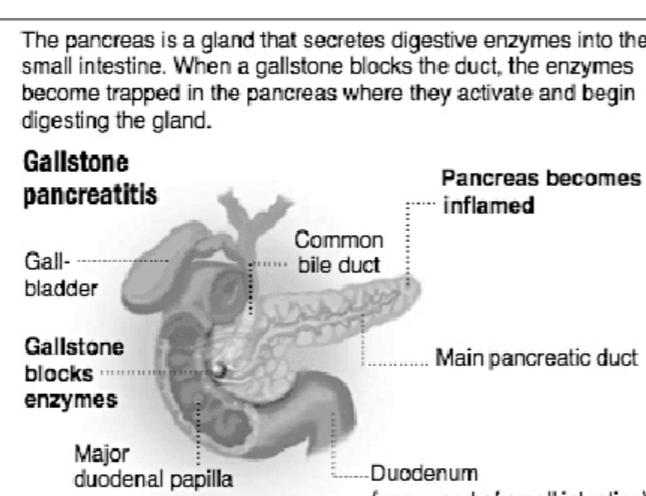
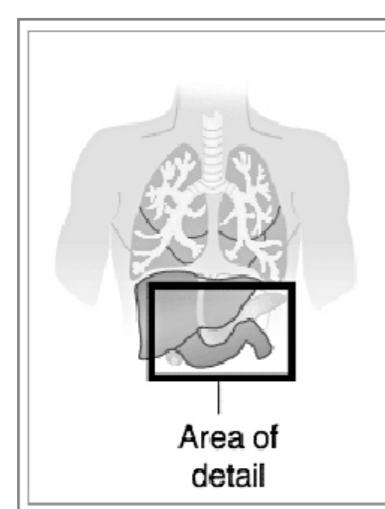
Drinking alcohol, the most widely used psychoactive drug worldwide, can be a pleasure, but unless the amount taken by regular drinkers are carefully limited many of the body's vital organs are at risk. When some of these are damaged seriously enough by the daily intake of alcohol over a number of years, the health and even the life of the drinker is threatened, warns WHO in one of a series of information sheets on alcohol misuse.

Worldwide, the amount of alcohol related illness puts a considerable strain on national health budgets and uses up funds which are badly needed to prevent and cure other diseases. The natural outcome is likely to be a higher incidence of alcohol related problems, and a further substantial drain on scarce economic and social resources.

The sex drive in men may be harmed by too much drinking. Sex hormone levels fall, leading to less interest in sex and a less ability to make love, or even impotence. Research among women has been less, but the evidence indicates that their interest also diminishes when they drink heavily.

To combat the health hazards of drinking, different approaches have been adopted including health education and motivation, encouraging people to stay within safe limits when they drink, restricting the availability of alcohol, and imposing a tax large enough to make drink a luxury.

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contributes to gallstones," says Byron Hoogwerf, MD, an endocrinologist at the Cleveland Clinic. Hoogwerf thinks that the gallbladders of people with diabetes may not empty out enough bile. The most likely reason for this is autonomic neuropathy (disease involving destruction of the tissues of the autonomic nervous system), but even in case where there is no obvious neuropathy, the gallbladder still may not

start moving out. This usually happens after a meal – particularly one with fatty foods – when the gallbladder contracts to send bile to the small intestine.

If one of the stones gets caught in the duct on the way, this can bring on a period of severe pain. These are called gallbladder attacks. The pain is usually right under the breastbone or a little to the right, but it can also move to between shoulder blades or

turn into an infection. If gallstones get lodged in any of the ducts for a long period of time, it can lead to serious inflammation, infection, and damage to the gallbladder, liver or pancreas. It can even be life threatening.

Symptoms such as sweating, chills, a low-grade fever, yellowish color in the skin or whites in the eyes, or clay-colored stool require immediate attention.

Some people only experience

Curry ingredient fights skin cancer

The compound that makes curry yellow could help fight skin cancer, U.S. researchers reported.

They said curcumin, found in the spice turmeric, interferes with melanoma cells.

Tests in laboratory dishes show that curcumin made melanoma skin cancer cells more likely to self-destruct in a process known as apoptosis.

The same team has found that curcumin helped stop the spread of breast cancer tumor cells to the lungs of mice. Bharat Aggarwal of the Department of Experimental Therapeutics at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and colleagues treated three batches of melanoma cells, known as cell lines, with curcumin at different doses and for varying times.

The curcumin suppressed two proteins that tumor cells use to keep themselves immortal.

"Based on our studies, we conclude the curcumin is a potent suppressor of cell viability and inducer of apoptosis in melanoma cell lines," Aggarwal's team wrote. "Future investigation to determine the effects of curcumin in animal models of melanoma and clinical trials are planned."

Earlier research has shown that curcumin, which acts as an antioxidant, can help prevent tumors from forming in the laboratory.

Aggarwal said people who eat plenty of turmeric have lower rates of some cancers, although the



spice itself has not been shown to reduce cancer risk in people.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com>

Anesthetic gel eases injection pain for kids

Applying a topical anesthetic half an hour before hand reduces pain for children getting a measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) shot, according to a report by Canadian researchers.

The pain kids experience from an injection "should not be taken lightly, as it may condition the child to suffer more intensely from other types of pain later in life," Dr. Gideon Koren from the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, told.

With this in mind, Dr. Koren and colleagues tested the effectiveness of numbing the injection site with amethocaine gel in reducing the pain associated with MMR vaccination in a study of 120 infants. Scores on a standard pain scale after vaccination were significantly lower in the children who had their arm dabbed with amethocaine (1.51) than in kids who had an inert placebo gel applied (2.29), the team reports in the medical journal Pediatrics.

Children pre-treated with amethocaine had significantly more skin reactions than did children that received placebo, but none of the skin reactions were serious.

The results of the study, the researchers note, are similar those that have shown lidocaine-prilocaine to be useful in reducing the pain of immunization. However, the amethocaine gel requires a shorter application time and appears to have a longer-lasting effect.

"There is an effective way to decrease vaccination pain in young children," Koren concluded. "There is no reason not to hope that next generation will not fear needles, as previous generations did."



Source: Pediatrics

Tips on exercise after childbirth

DR MD SAIFUL ISLAM

Regular exercise after childbirth offers a range of health benefits. For example, exercise helps you return to your pre-pregnancy shape and gives you increased energy to cope with the demands of new motherhood. It is important to consult with a doctor before you start any postnatal exercise programme. You may need more time than you think to heal from the rigours of childbirth. This is especially true if you had a caesarean section. However, you can begin exercises to tone your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles as soon as you feel ready. If you had an episiotomy (surgical incision of the perineum near the vagina to prevent tearing during childbirth) or tear during birth, pelvic floor exercises can help to speed your recovery. See the doctor, midwife or physiotherapist for more information.

Gentle tummy exercise

Pregnancy splits your abdominal muscles down the middle. It is important to make sure your muscles have healed before you do any vigorous abdominal exercises, such as crunches. In the meantime, you can tone your tummy by performing an exercise that strengthens the deepest muscle layer (transversus abdominus). Be guided by your doctor, but general guidelines include:

- 1. You can perform these exercises lying down, sitting, standing, or on your hands and knees.
- 2. Keep your lower back flat.
- 3. Breathe out, and draw your belly button back towards your spine. Your lower back shouldn't flex or move.
- 4. Hold this position and breathe lightly.
- 5. Relax, and repeat up to 10 times per set.
- 6. Do 10 sets, as many times per day as you can.
- 7. You may like to perform your pelvic floor exercises at the same time.

Tummy exercise - stage two

Once the gap in your abdominal muscles has closed, you can progress to more demanding exercises. General guidelines include:

- 1. Lie on your back, with bent knees and both feet on the floor. Put your hands on your thighs.
- 2. Breathe out, contract your abdominal muscles and lift your head and shoulders off the floor. Slide your hands towards your knees. Only aim to get your shoulder blades off the floor.
- 3. Keep your head and shoulders stable. Hold the position, then slowly ease your shoulders and head back to the floor.

Repeat up to 10 times for one set.

2. Perform around three sets per session.

3. You may like to perform your pelvic floor exercises at the same time (see below).

Exercise for the lower abdominal muscles

The lower abdominal muscles are located below your belly button. To work these muscles, guidelines include:

- 1. Make sure your abdominal muscles have healed. Until the gap is closed, only perform the 'gentle tummy exercise' option.

- 2. Lie on your back with your knees bent and both feet flat on the floor.

- 3. Contract your abdominal muscles.

- 4. Slowly slide your feet away from you, aiming to straighten both legs. The idea is to straighten the legs without arching your lower back.

- 5. If your back starts to arch, stop and slide your feet back towards your bottom.

- 6. Aim for 10 repetitions per set.

- 7. Perform around three sets per session.

- 8. As your lower abdominal muscles get stronger, you'll be able to slide your feet further and further away.

Pelvic floor exercises

The pelvic floor muscles are tightly slung between the tailbone (coccyx) and the pubic bone, and support the bowel, bladder, uterus and vagina. Childbirth can weaken these muscles and cause problems such as incontinence. To exercise them, you must first direct your attention to these muscles. To help you identify these muscles, they are the ones that you contract to stop urinating. Try to relax your abdominal muscles. Don't bear down or hold your breath. Gradually squeeze and increase the tension until you have contracted the muscles as hard as you can.

Release gently and slowly. Then perform the exercises, which include:

- 1. Squeeze slowly and hold for between five and 10 seconds. Release slowly. Repeat 10 times.

- 2. Perform quick, short and hard squeezes. Repeat 10 times.

- 3. Squeeze, then clear your throat or cough lightly. Repeat three times.

- 4. Aim for five or six sets each day.

- 5. These exercises can be performed lying down, sitting or standing.

Types of aerobic exercise

Keep in mind that your ligaments and joints will be loose for at least three months following the birth, so avoid any high impact exercises or sports that require rapid direction changes. Vigorous stretching should be avoided too. Recommended postnatal exercise includes brisk walking, swimming, aquaerobics, and

yoga, pilates, low impact aerobic workouts, light weight training, cycling etc.

See your doctor for further recommendations and cautions.

General suggestions for aerobic exercise

Be guided by your doctor, but general suggestions include:

- 1. Give yourself sufficient time to heal, particularly if you have had a caesarean birth.

- 2. Consult with your doctor before starting any postnatal exercise program - you may be advised to wait, or adapt your exercises.

- 3. Aim for slow, gradual weight loss of around half a kilogram per week.

- 4. Wear a supportive bra.