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# CENTRAL PA HEALTH CARE QUALITY UNIT NEWSLETTER FOR HEALTHY OUTCOMES

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*a monthly newsletter provided by the Central PA Health Care Quality Unit*

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## SAFETY TIPS

*From Walgreens.com*

Exercise is good for you, but make sure you enjoy it as much as possible by staying safe. We don't want to put a damper on your enthusiasm, but it is important to be aware of potential dangers, including crime, traffic, and injury. Use your common sense and good judgment while exercising, and you should be fine. Here are a few tips:

### Outdoor hazards

Avoid crime by exercising with someone else, or stay in populated, well-lit areas. Carry a whistle in case you have a problem.

Always obey traffic rules when exercising near streets or intersections. If you can, try to use sidewalks, parks, or pedestrian paths. These "exercise friendly" places take you out of the way of traffic and are much safer than the street.

If you choose to exercise at night, wear a reflective vest or sash. This will help drivers see you in the dark.

Do not wear headphones -- they distract your attention and obstruct your ability to hear traffic.

Carry identification and a small amount of cash, just in case you need them.

The risk of injury increases if you do weight-bearing exercises more than five days per week. If you exercise every day of the week (physical activity every day is good), reserve at least 1 - 2 days per week for non-weight bearing activity.

When cycling, skating, or rollerblading, always wear a helmet and knee pads.

Always warm up before your workout, and cool down after it. Don't forget to stretch when you are done.

Don't do the same kind of exercise day after day. You want to avoid putting too much stress on one part of the body while neglecting the others. Don't continue to exercise on joints that hurt -- stop or change your activity.

Drink plenty of water before, during, and after you exercise. This is important at all times of the year, but especially when exercising in warm weather.

Take it slow and be cautious about pushing your limits. Don't push yourself too hard, especially in the heat. Remember that you still need to replenish fluid even when you don't feel thirsty. If you do feel dizzy, lightheaded, or sluggish -- stop, rest, and drink some water immediately!

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. It may decrease your level of consciousness or even cause a seizure. If you experience any of the more serious symptoms -- such as nausea, headache, confusion, clamminess, trouble focusing, fever, or sudden lack of sweating -- you should go to the hospital right away. You should also promptly see a doctor if your heavy breathing, dizziness, and excessive fatigue remain after you have rested and drank water.

If heat, humidity, or pollution make exercise too hard, exercise indoors or during cooler hours.

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# Healthy Food Shopping

*From Krames & The Staywell Company via Merck Source*

## What Is Healthy Food Shopping?

Healthy eating begins with the food you buy. Stocking your kitchen with foods that are low in fat, salt, and sugar and high in fiber will help you eat well. The result: You'll feel better and have an easier time maintaining a healthy weight.

## What Food Do You Buy?

Think about how you shop. How many of the statements below apply to you.

- You buy most of your fruit in a can and your vegetables frozen in butter or cream sauce.
- At the bread counter, you reach for sweet rolls, doughnuts, and cinnamon bread.
- The picture on the package, not the nutrition label, is what sells you on a food.
- You choose meat laced with fat, and fish or chicken dressed in a fried coating.
- For desserts you head for the bakery cakes or the frozen pies and ice cream.
- You worry about the fat and salt you add to food, but not what's added in processing.

## Healthy Choices

When you go grocery shopping pick a variety of foods from the groups below. Choose those that are low in fat, salt, and sugar and high in fiber. Try to cut down on fats, oils, and sweets.

### Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Dried Beans

Choose white-meat poultry and lean cuts of meat, such as round or sirloin. Eat more fresh fish and dried beans. Avoid ground meat and fish canned in oil.

### Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta

Choose whole-wheat bread, bagels, pretzels, and pasta; oatmeal and high-fiber cold cereals; brown or wild rice; and low-fat crackers. Avoid muffins and doughnuts, sugar-frosted cereals, chips, and pasta with cream or cheese sauce.

### Milk, Yogurt, Eggs, and Cheese

Choose 1% or nonfat (skim) milk, nonfat yogurt, and low-fat or nonfat cheese. Avoid cream, whole milk, and high-fat cheeses such as cheddar and Swiss. Use egg substitutes or egg whites in place of whole eggs. Choose ice milk or nonfat frozen yogurt instead of ice cream.

### Fruits and Vegetables

Fresh and plain frozen vegetables and fruits are low in fat and high in fiber. Go easy on avocados, olives, fruit canned in heavy syrup, and vegetables packed in sauce or with added salt.

### Fats, Oils, and Sweets

Reduced-fat margarine, nonfat salad dressing, and nonfat mayonnaise are the better choices. Olive and canola are the better oils, but use sparingly. Cut down on desserts and candy—especially if they're made with palm or coconut oil, butter, or cream.

## Tips for Healthy Food Shopping

Healthy food shopping is the first step toward healthy eating. Follow these tips as you fill your shopping cart.

- Head for the fresh fruits and vegetables first, breads and cereals next, then fish, poultry, meat, and dairy products.
- Buy as many fresh foods as possible. Canned, packaged, and frozen foods often have added fat, salt, and sugar.
- Don't try to change everything at once. Start with one change, such as eating more fresh vegetables or switching from whole milk to low fat milk. When you are comfortable with that change you can make another.
- Plan your meals ahead then make a shopping list and follow it. Resist picking up snack foods and other extras.
- Don't go shopping when you are hungry. Eat something healthy such as an apple or graham crackers, first.

# Dextromethorphan Overdose

*From Walgreens.com*

Dextromethorphan is a medicine that helps stop coughing. It is considered a cough suppressant. Dextromethorphan overdose occurs when someone accidentally or intentionally takes more than the normal or recommended amount of this medication. The poisonous ingredient is Dextromethorphan and it is found in many over-the-counter cough and cold medicines, including the following:

- Robitussin DM
- Triaminic DM
- Rondec DM
- Benylin DM
- Drixoral
- St. Joseph Cough Suppressant
- Coricidin
- Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold and Cough
- NyQuil
- DayQuil
- TheraFlu
- Tylenol Cold
- Dimetapp DM

Symptoms of overdose include breathing problems – slow, labored, shallow, no breathing, blurred vision, blood pressure -- high or low, coma, constipation, drowsiness, dizziness, hallucinations, muscle twitches, nausea, rapid heart beat, spasms of the stomach and intestines, and vomiting.

This can be a serious overdose; therefore you should seek immediate medical help. However, before calling emergency determine the following information:

- Patient's age, weight, and condition
- Name of product (as well as the ingredients and strength, if known)
- Time it was swallowed
- Amount swallowed
- If the medicine was prescribed for the patient
- Poison Control, or a local emergency number

The National Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) can be called from anywhere in the United States. This national hotline number will let you talk to experts in poisoning. They will give you further instructions.

This is a free and confidential service. All local poison control centers in the United States use this national number. You should call if you have any questions about poisoning or poison prevention. It does NOT need to be an emergency. You can call for any reason, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week.

## **What to expect at the emergency room**

The health care provider will measure and monitor the patient's vital signs, including temperature, pulse, breathing rate, and blood pressure. Symptoms will be treated as appropriate. The patient may receive:

- Activated charcoal
- Narcotic antagonist (a medicine to reverse the effect of the painkiller)
- Tube thru mouth into the stomach to empty the stomach (gastric lavage)
- Expectations (prognosis)

This medication is safe, if you take it as directed. The person administering the medication must carefully read and follow the package directions.

*The information offered in this newsletter is to increase your awareness of health related conditions and situations and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. If you believe you or someone you support has a condition, please seek the advice of a physician.*

# PROSTATE GLAND

From Merck & Company, Inc, 2006

Urinary symptoms begin to trouble many men as they reach middle age. The most common source of symptoms is the prostate gland. The good news is that there are many ways to treat prostate symptoms today. The following information will help in learning more about the prostate and today's treatment options.

## What is the prostate, and what does it do?



The prostate is a small gland located just below a man's bladder. It surrounds the urethra, the tube through which urine flows. The prostate produces fluid that combines with sperm and other fluids to form semen. The prostate reaches its adult size, a little less than an ounce, by age 20. Typically, growth stops at this time, then begins again at about age 45 and continues throughout life.

## What is BPH?

The most frequent cause of "prostate trouble" is a condition called BPH. BPH stands for *benign prostatic hyperplasia*, which means *no-cancerous* enlargement of the prostate. BPH is quite common, but the exact cause is unknown. By the time men reach their 60s, many will be affected by BPH. Unfortunately, BPH causes some of these men to experience urinary symptoms that may lead them to see their doctor. The average age for developing symptoms of BPH is 65 years in Caucasians and 60 in African Americans. Although any man can get BPH, it's less frequent in men of Asian descent.

Today, BPH is rarely a life-threatening condition. It progresses slowly, and potentially serious complications can be readily anticipated and avoided. Even so, the symptoms of BPH can be bothersome and interfere with daily life. And in some cases, BPH can lead to more serious conditions and the need for surgery. Thanks to ongoing research, our understanding of BPH and how to treat it is constantly improving. Today, we have many treatment options, including ways to relieve symptoms and also reduce the risks of suffering more serious problems in the future.

Annoying symptoms are probably what lead most men with BPH to see a physician. But there are reasons to consider treatment other than symptom relief. In a certain number of men, BPH eventually leads to more serious problems. In a recent study that followed over 3,000 men with enlarged prostates and moderate to severe symptoms of BPH for over four years, one in seven untreated patients experienced a condition known as *acute urinary retention* (AUR) or had to undergo surgery by the end of the study.

In acute urinary retention, pressure from the enlarged prostate cuts off the flow of urine, making it impossible to urinate. This is an emergency, usually requiring the insertion of a tube through the penis into the bladder to allow urine to drain. The tube may need to stay in place for several weeks. Surgery is often necessary when symptoms become severe or cannot be controlled with drug therapy.

Other serious complications of BPH include infections of the urinary tract or prostate gland, loss of normal bladder function, and kidney damage.

These risks factors increase your chances of suffering acute urinary retention or surgery.

- **Age:** The older you are, the greater your risk. If you're in your 50s, you have 3 times the risk of men in their 40s. If you're in your 70s, you have 8 times the risk of men in their 40s.
- **Symptoms:** If you have moderate to severe symptoms, you have 3 times the risk of men with mild symptoms.
- **Prostate Size:** The bigger your prostate grows, the greater your risk for acute urinary retention or surgery.

Today there are a number of effective treatments for BPH that can help improve your symptoms.

The doctor may recommend a period of "watchful waiting," during which time no treatment is recommended but the condition is periodically monitored. If drug treatment is recommended, find out the short- and long-term benefits, and ask about possible side effects. When considering surgery, ask the doctor what to expect in terms of success rates, side effects, complications, and time to recovery. You are an important part of the treatment decision. If the potential complications of some therapies are a problem for you, make sure your doctor knows that. There is no one "best" treatment for everyone. By working with your doctor, you may help keep BPH from interfering with your life.