



The Beacon

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Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

“Guiding your way to better health management”

Contact lenses: Prevent infection with simple steps

News Update: A popular contact lens solution has been identified as the possible cause of an outbreak of potentially serious eye infections, prompting the manufacturer to stop shipments of the solution.

Bausch & Lomb voluntarily halted shipments of its ReNu Moisture LOC contact lens solution after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warned of an increased number of cases of Fusarium keratitis, a fungal infection that damages the cornea.

More than 100 cases of fungal keratitis have been reported in 17 different states. The FDA has made no direct link between ReNu and the infections, but there appears to be high usage of ReNu products among affected people. Untreated, fungal keratitis can scar the cornea and cause permanent vision loss.

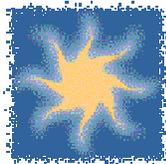
What does this mean to you? If you have existing supplies of ReNu Moisture LOC solution, consider using an alternative solution until more information is available.

To reduce the risk of infection, always wash your hands with soap and water before handling your contact lenses. Wear your contact lenses only as directed, and follow the manufacturer's cleaning and storage guidelines. Also consider a "rub and rinse" cleaning method, which helps minimize contamination.

Remove your contact lenses immediately if you notice signs or symptoms of infection, including:

- Eye redness or pain
- Eye discharge or swelling
- Tearing
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Blurred vision

If you're concerned about an eye infection, consult your doctor. Prompt antibiotic treatment can help prevent permanent eye damage.



We May Need More Vitamin D

The most important function of Vitamin D is to keep our bones strong. Its main sources are foods and sunshine.

The current recommended daily intake of Vitamin D is 200 IU per day from birth to age 50, 400 IU between 51 and 70 years, and 600 IU after the age of 71.

Recent studies, however, suggest that 1000 IU a day may reduce the incidence of certain cancers – such as those of the ovary, breast and colon – by as much as 50%. This is because Vitamin D strengthens the immune system and controls cell growth.

You can satisfy the Vitamin D requirements by:

Diet - a serving of oily fish contains between 250 and 360 IU, and one tablespoon of cod liver oil has 1,360 IU.

Supplements – alone or combined with calcium.

Sunlight – exposing 40% of your body without sunscreen for 10 – 15 minutes provides an adequate dose

But, be careful as more than the new recommended dose the diet (not to exceed 1,000 IU, especially if you are exposed to a lot of sunlight) can cause gastrointestinal problems and raise blood levels of calcium, resulting in confusion and heart rhythm abnormalities.

Food intolerance vs. food allergy: What's the difference?

Many people believe they're allergic to certain foods. But true food allergies are uncommon. Only about 1% of adults and 5% of children have true food allergies — an adverse reaction to foods that is triggered by the immune system. Far more people have food intolerance, an unpleasant reaction to food that doesn't involve the immune system.

In a true **food allergy**, your immune system mistakenly identifies a specific food or a component of a food as a harmful substance. This causes certain cells to make antibodies to fight the culprit food or food component (the allergen). The next time you eat even the smallest amount of that food the antibodies sense it and signal your immune system to release histamine and other chemicals into your bloodstream.

Signs and symptoms of a food allergy

usually develop within an hour after eating the offending food and may include:

- Hives, itching or eczema
- Swelling of the lips, face, tongue and throat, or other parts of the body
- Wheezing, nasal congestion or trouble breathing
- Abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting

Other reactions to food don't involve your immune system or, for this reason, the release of histamine. These reactions aren't true food allergies. Instead, they may be **food intolerances**. Because food intolerances may cause many of the same signs and symptoms as food allergies do - such as nausea, vomiting, cramping and diarrhea - people often confuse the two.

It's important to distinguish a food intolerance from a food allergy. If you have an intolerance, you usually can eat small amounts of problem foods without a reaction. By contrast, if you have a true food allergy, even a tiny amount of the food may trigger a serious allergic reaction.

While the new food labels won't include every possible allergen, they will list the top eight, which account for 90 percent of all documented food allergies:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts (such as almonds, cashews, walnuts)
- Fish (such as bass, cod, flounder)
- Shellfish (such as crab, lobster, shrimp)
- Soy
- Wheat

If you have a reaction to a particular food, tell your doctor about it. Tests can be done to determine whether you have a true food allergy.

Med-Cert provides:

Utilization Management, Maternity Management, Large Case and Wellness Disease Management, Transplant Coordination and Stop Loss Assessments

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What's Swimming With You At the Beach?



The International Coastal Cleanup removed more than 7.6 million pounds of garbage from the ocean in 88 countries in 2004. That total included nearly 1.3 million cigarette butts, more than 700,000 food wrappers and containers, almost 500,000 plastic bottles, 472,000 cups, plates and utensils, and 311,000 cans. We say “**Yuck**”, and think of the poor fish: They can't even head for a shower after a dip, so be considerate, and **don't litter**.



Say "Yes" to Cilantro

Adding chopped cilantro to your salsa could help keep illness-causing bacteria to a minimum.

Cilantro contains antibacterial compounds that may help inhibit *Salmonella choleraesuis*, a common culprit in food poisoning. The best safeguards against food-borne illness are still frequent hand washing and safe food handling practices. However, serving meals with a side of cilantro-seasoned salsa may be both a nutritious and protective bonus.

Benefit: Protecting your immune system can make your RealAge as much as 6 years younger.

RECIPE CORNER

Green Salsa



Use this salsa as you would the more familiar red varieties. Tomatillos (Mexican-style green tomatoes) are available at most large supermarkets. *Makes about 2 cups.*

- 8 Tomatillos, husks removed
- 3 Shallots, peeled
- 2 cloves Garlic, peeled
- 1 can Mild green chiles
- ¼ cup Cilantro, chopped
- 1 Jalapeno, seeded (optional)
- Salt to taste

Place all the ingredients in a food processor bowl. Pulse until a course salsa forms. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate.

Root for Recovery



Could a spicy root help make you more comfortable after surgery? Research says it may be so.

Studies show that taking about 1 gram of ginger may help reduce postoperative nausea and vomiting associated with anesthesia. However, ginger is not safe for everyone and may be contraindicated for certain medications and health conditions. Consult your healthcare provider before taking any herbal remedies.

Benefit: Actively patrolling your health can make your RealAge as much as 12 years younger.

FIRST AID: BRUISE

A bruise forms when a blow breaks small blood vessels near your skin's surface, allowing a small amount of blood to leak out into the tissues under your skin. The trapped blood appears as a black-and-blue mark. Sometimes, there also are tiny red dots or red splotches.

If your skin isn't broken, you don't need a bandage. You can, however, enhance healing with these simple techniques:

- **Elevate the injured area.**
- **Apply cold pack for 30 to 60 minutes at a time for a day or two after the injury.**
- **Consider acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) for pain relief.**

See your doctor if:

- **You have unusually large or painful bruises — particularly if your bruises seem to develop for no known reasons.**
- **You bruise easily and you're experiencing abnormal bleeding elsewhere, such as from your nose or gums, or you notice blood in your eyes, your stool or your urine.**
- **You have no history of bruising, but suddenly experience bruises.**



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert, Inc. Our sources for this edition were the Web MD, Real Age - Health Tools and Tips for Living Younger, and the Mayo Clinic web sites.