

**MOST
DANGEROUS
PILLS
IN AMERICA TODAY**

Steven Harper



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Introduction

Medical prescriptions are on the rise and while medical advances have helped people live longer, fuller lives, many medications prescribed today are actually dangerous and require some research before taking them. Before accepting any medication, it's essential that you find out what the medication will do to your body and what the side effects are.

One of the biggest issues in medical prescriptions is the fact that one medicine may lead to the need for another. For example, you may take a medicine to treat your lungs and it causes a boost in blood pressure, which causes the doctor to put you on blood pressure medication. That medicine might result in higher blood sugar, which necessitates the use of another medication. And so on and so forth.

As we get older, our bodies tend to need a little more support than before. Chronic aches and pains start up and in some cases, even more severe issues. Your blood pressure may rise, or perhaps you have issues with blood sugar skyrocketing. It's quite common for those over 50 to take several different medications at once.

Why You Need to Understand Side Effects

Nearly all medicine has some kind of side effect. While these are things that don't affect everyone, it's essential to be aware of what the possible reactions can be. Any adverse reactions should be reported to your doctor immediately.

Knowing what side effects are most common with a medication will also allow you to decide if you really want to start taking it or if you can handle the risks. Sometimes, there may be another medication that can do the same thing for you, with fewer effects. It's worth talking to your medical professional about alternatives and how likely you are to suffer from the side effects.

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Side effects can also affect you more if you're taking another medication. Sometimes, the two will enhance each other and make it more likely that you'll have to deal with adverse effects. The same goes for alcohol, which can either reduce the effectivity of the medication or increase the likelihood of side effects, depending on what you're taking.

What Are Your Options?

Sometimes, you'll have no choice but to take the medication prescribed, as it is a lifesaving prescription. However, there are often natural remedies that can replace the more dangerous choices. Consider seeing a holistic doctor or naturalist before committing to a potentially dangerous chemical solution. At the very least, they can advise you on how to minimize risks.

Above all, do your research. Make sure you understand exactly how the medication works and look into alternatives. Keep in mind that doctors are often stuck on one medication because they prefer to use it or have another motive for prescribing it . . . but you are allowed to question the decision if you feel there is another option.

New medications are being approved every day and some are considerably safer, with fewer side effects, than those already in existence. It's certainly worth looking into alternatives.

Natural Remedies: Should You Use Them?

Many people look to nature to provide them with a way to manage their symptoms and illnesses. Everything from herbal teas to essential oils can potentially help you manage your symptoms, but natural remedies are not for everyone. Sometimes, you really do need the medication and that's where you have to research and make a decision to use the method that works best for you.

A natural doctor or holistic doctor will be able to guide you in the direction of more natural choices for your health issues. One very important thing to remember, though, is that treating the symptoms is not the best way to go. The underlying issue must also be addressed.

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They say prevention is the best medicine and this is very true. If you can manage your health before it gets to the point of seeing multiple doctors and getting potentially unpleasant prescriptions, all the better.

Start with your lifestyle. Are you exercising enough? Do you live in a clean house or is there a possibility of health issues from mold and dander?

Look at your diet, too. If you're eating a lot of sugar and processed food, you're nearly guaranteed poor health. Certain diseases, such as Type 2 diabetes, have actually been reversed with just some diet changes and exercise. Obviously this isn't possible for all health issues, but you can't go wrong with a healthy diet and a fit lifestyle. It can only help build your immune system and aid your body in fighting off any diseases.

Not sure where to start? Consult a health consultant or natural doctor to find out where you should begin. Your health is in your own hands, so take control today.



Chapter 1:

Antacids/GERD

Medications

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Acid reflux may not be life threatening, but it can definitely cause discomfort. It may also be a sign of something more serious going on in the body, so it's important to investigate the reasons behind the reflux, as well as treat the symptoms.

In some cases, there are physical abnormalities that require further treatment. Acidic reflux may also cause or be the result of ulcers in the stomach and small intestines, so it's worth finding out why you need to pop so many pills just to avoid the burn.

Esomeprazole (Nexium): This medication actually prevents the stomach from producing acid and is frequently prescribed for stomach ulcers. By blocking acid production, the medicine allows the stomach to heal.

The side effects most commonly seen include diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, as well as headaches and dizziness. In some patients, increased anxiety, water retention, leg cramps and muscle pain, as well as irregular heartbeats can be a result of the medicine, as well.

Famotidine (Pepcid): When someone is diagnosed with stomach or intestinal ulcers, they may be prescribed famotidine. This medication reduces the amount of acid produced by the stomach.

It can cause headaches and intestinal upsets. More serious effects include fever and chills, mood changes, hallucinations, changes in heart rate, bruising, and seizures. It may also worsen depression and anxiety.

Lansoprazole (Prevacid): Lansoprazole is similar to the above medications in that it blocks the enzyme that produces acid, giving the stomach and esophagus time to heal.

This medicine is not without side effects and may cause diarrhea, constipation, rashes, headaches, nausea and vomiting. In more severe cases, heightened anxiety, abnormal heartbeat, dizziness, and muscle pain may also appear, as well as edema. Taking the medicine for a long period of time may increase osteoporosis and cause

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deficiencies of Vitamin B12 and magnesium, increasing the probability of a heart attack.

Omeprazole (Prilosec, Zegerid): This medication reduces the amount of stomach acid produced and is usually prescribed for heartburn, persistent coughs and when damage to the esophagus causes trouble swallowing.

Abdominal pain and headaches are among the more common side effects of omeprazole, but it may also drop magnesium levels and cause muscle cramps. Diarrhea may also be an issue and the medication can cause a Vitamin B12 deficiency if taken for over three years.

Ranitidine (Zantac): Used mostly for GERD and ulcers or any condition where the stomach produces excessive acid, ranitidine can be used alone or in combination with other medications. It's usually not a long term drug.

The medication can cause drowsiness, stomach pain, headaches, nausea and vomiting, and stomach issues, such as diarrhea or constipation. However, it has also been linked to the inflammation of the liver, which will be noted when your eyes or skin begin to take on a yellow tinge and your urine is dark. In severe cases, ranitidine may cause confusion or agitation, hallucinations, blurred vision and increases depression and rapid heart rates.

What to Use Instead

If you're going to avoid GERD medications, what are your alternatives? Here are a few safe options.

Baking Soda: Stir a teaspoon of baking soda into a glass of water and drink it down to help neutralize stomach acid. The only downsides to this particular remedy is that it doesn't taste great and it is high in salt, so you need to be careful if you have high blood pressure. However, it works very quickly.

Ginger Tea: Ginger tea is commonly used to prevent nausea and stomach pain, but it is also very effective when battling GERD. Use fresh ginger, not the dried tea bag type. Slice a one-inch piece of root and bring to a boil in two cups of water. Simmer

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for 30 minutes. You can keep the tea in the refrigerator for a few days and drink before each meal.

Mustard: Strange as it sounds, mustard can eliminate a bout of bad reflux. Take a teaspoon of mustard to cut the acid burn. It has plenty of alkaline components that will help reduce the acid in the stomach.

Elevate Your Bed: Put a brick under each side of the head of your bed to lift just the head of your bed. This is particularly effective if you suffer from acid reflux more at night. The elevation allows gravity to pull the acid down, rather than letting it flow up your esophagus.

Stay Upright: Don't eat and then lie down. You should wait at least four hours after a meal before lying down, since that lets the food move down in the GI tract. A fresh meal will cause excess pressure on the esophageal sphincter and allows acid to move up your throat.

Eat a Banana: Bananas are a natural antacid and can help prevent acid reflux. Eat one banana every day (just make sure it's ripe) to help reduce stomach acid. Apples, watermelon, and honeydew melon are also excellent at preventing heartburn and are very good for you, too.

Reduce Stress: Often, we experience more acid reflux when dealing with stressful situations, so it stands to reason that reducing that stress will help reduce reflux symptoms.

Try these natural methods before taking potentially dangerous medicine.



Chapter 2:

Antibiotics

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Commonly prescribed for infections or suspected infections, antibiotics kill off bacteria. Unfortunately, they tend to kill good bacteria, as well as the bad, and can cause antibiotic resistance. With the over-prescription of these powerful medications, more and more bacteria and diseases are developing that cannot be touched by regular antibiotics.

Remember that antibiotics cannot do anything in the face of a virus, as they are only good for killing off bacteria. This means that taking an antibiotic for something like a cold is pointless and only serves to boost antibiotic resistance.

If you do end up taking antibiotics, be sure to counteract the negative effects by taking a probiotic to help repopulate your gut flora once you've finished taking the medication. Yogurt with live cultures is excellent for this, as is kombucha or kefir. You can also find probiotics in capsule or powder form.

Common antibiotics include:

Amoxicillin (Amoxil): Used to treat skin, lung, and eye, ear, nose, and throat infections, as well as UTIs, amoxicillin is one of the most commonly prescribed antibiotics.

Minor side effects include stomach upset, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and possible rashes or headaches. Stronger effects could mean rashes, jaundice, hives and colitis, or even seizures.

Cephalexin (Keflex): Patients with heart conditions will be given Cephalexin before dental procedures as a cautionary measure, but it is also used in general bacterial infections.

Side effects of Cephalexin include stomach and GI tract complaints, headaches, fatigue, dizziness, joint pain, nausea and vomiting, swelling, and itchy skin. It may also cause a rash.

Ciprofloxacin (Cipro): This particular drug is used to treat infections of the lungs, skin, bones, joints and UTIs. It is also one of the more dangerous options when it comes to antibiotics.

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Cipro can cause diarrhea, dizziness, stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, blurred vision, fatigue, anxiety and agitation, as well as insomnia or nightmares. This antibiotic has also been associated with ligament damage, so can cause popping and snapping in the muscles, stiffness or even loss of movement in one or more of your joints. Easy bruising, burning skin and eyes, and fever are also some side effects of Ciprofloxacin.

Doxycycline (Vibramycin): Doxycycline, a tetracycline class antibiotic, is usually used for STIs, infections in the respiratory tract, eyes and in other infections where penicillin cannot be used.

The usual side affects apply to this medication, including nausea and vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain, but it can also cause photosensitivity, hives or even hemolytic anemia.

What to Use Instead

Nature has provided us with a number of alternatives to regular antibiotics. While care should always be taken when using something this strong, a natural alternative usually carries far fewer side effects than the harsher medications.

Oregano Oil: This potent oil has been shown to work more effectively in some situations than antibiotics themselves, thanks to high levels of carvacrol and thymol. It can be taken internally or applied externally, but since it is so strong, it's not advisable to take the oil for more than a week at a time.

Honey: A natural wound treatment since ancient times, honey is a simple antibiotic that never spoils. It helps keep wounds clean, moist and kills off bacteria. It's best used directly on wounds or burns.

Apple Cider Vinegar: This sharp tasting vinegar is powerful against infections and even viruses (which regular antibiotics won't touch). It can be taken as is, or watered down to ease the burn.

Garlic: Something you probably eat on a regular basis, garlic is an excellent antibiotic and antiviral, but only in raw form. When cooked, the antibacterial

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properties are destroyed. If you want to use it as an antibiotic, mash or chop the raw garlic and allow it to sit for 5-10 minutes before eating. It may also be applied topically.

Turmeric: Used in curry or foods as a colorful ingredient, this spice has actually been used to treat MRSA, an antibiotic resistant infection in wounds. It may be mixed with water and taken internally, or made into a paste to apply topically. The fresh root may also be used, by crushing and applying it.

Colloidal Silver: Perhaps the only thing on our list that isn't a food, colloidal silver is a very useful antibacterial that is used even by medical professionals on wounds. However, it can be taken internally, as well as being directly applied to the wound or infection. It's even possible to make your own at home with a fairly simple electrical setup.

You have a number of options when it comes to natural alternatives to antibiotics. However, it's important to note that these, though natural, may still kill off some good bacteria, so replenish your body with probiotics.



Chapter 3:

Arthritis Medications

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Arthritis is a fairly common ailment as you age. Unfortunately, some of the medications prescribed for it can have devastating side effects. It's a good idea to know exactly what you're getting into by doing your research before taking any of the following medications.

Often, you can take acetaminophen or ibuprofen to relieve pain and inflammation (see Painkillers), but other medications are prescription only.

Abatacept (Orencia): This drug is a protein made by man to suppress the immune system and allow healing from rheumatoid arthritis. It reduces inflammation and bone/tissue damage and needs to be injected.

Common side effects of abatacept include headaches and dizziness, nausea and vomiting, changes to blood pressure, shortness of breath, and it can also provoke respiratory infections. The medication has also been linked to cancer.

Certolizumab pegol (Cimzia): This medication is used for all types of arthritis, to help reduce moderate pain. It is injectable and can cause reactions at the injection site.

It can cause sinus pain and a stuffy nose, as well as stomach pain and upsets, with diarrhea or constipation. It also increases the risk of urinary tract infections and upper respiratory infections, or other infections. The medication has also been linked to heart failure and cancer.

Diclofenac (Arthrotec): An NSAID, or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug, diclofenac is used to reduce pain and joint stiffness in those suffering from arthritis. It reduces swelling or inflammation to allow for easier, pain free movement.

The medication may cause your blood pressure to rise and can give an upset stomach, with heartburn, gas, constipation or diarrhea and nausea. Dizziness and drowsiness, along with headaches are also common. Some users may notice signs of heart failure, such as edema, chest pain, fatigue and weight gain, while others may experience mood swings as one of the rarer side effects.

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Etanercept (Enbrel): This medication blocks the TNF alpha protein, which causes inflammation. This prevents the joint inflammation that comes with arthritis and can help prevent fever and pain, as well.

Etanercept may cause pain and swelling at the point of injection. It also has been linked to itching, dizziness, headaches and irritations in the nose and throat. It can make way for other infections, such as bacterial sepsis, tuberculosis and other infections, since it is blocking a vital part of the immune system response to infections. Etanercept has been linked to myelitis, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and optic neuritis.

Hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil): This medication was originally used to treat malaria, but it is also a last option for arthritis and other auto-immune diseases.

The drug can cause stomach cramps and nausea, diarrhea, lack of appetite and dizziness or headaches, but it may also cause symptoms of heart failure, weight loss or gain, hair loss, mood changes and may make depression worse. It can also cause hallucinations in some cases. It cannot be used if you are suffering from diabetes, kidney disease, or a blood disorder, among other diseases.

Infliximab (Remicade): An injectable, infliximab is used to block the proteins that cause inflammation throughout the body. It is used in several types of arthritis, as well as Crohn's disease.

Basic side effects include a cough, back pain, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, fever, weakness and headaches, along with fever, a rash and chest pain. However, the more concerning side effect is the drop in effectiveness of the immune system. Blocking the proteins that fight off infection leaves the body open to upper respiratory tract infections, UTIs, and other potentially dangerous illnesses.

Methotrexate (Trexall): Methotrexate is used in both arthritis and cancer, but it tends to be a last resort when it comes to arthritis pain. The drug is usually used for rheumatoid arthritis.

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Side effects include nausea, vomiting, pain in the abdomen, dizziness and drowsiness, but it can also cause your hair to fall out temporarily. It also reduces fertility in males and more severe effects include stiff neck, vision changes, one sided weakness, mood changes, seizures and a drastically reduced immune response, which leaves you open to all types of infections.

Minocycline (Minocin): Minocycline is actually an antibiotic with inflammation reducing properties. It may be prescribed in cases where other medications are not working or where the doctor suspects an infection is partially responsible for the pain.

Vertigo, nausea and vomiting, as well as dizziness and diarrhea are all common side effects of this type of medication. However, it can sometimes cause intracranial pressure, liver issues, discoloration of teeth and gums, or kidney problems, as well as decreased hearing and difficulty swallowing. Using the medication for a long period of time may also result in thrush or a yeast infection.

Sulfasalazine (Azulfidine): Prescribed early enough with arthritis, this medication can ease the joint pain and stiffness, while preventing further damage to the joints. It's also a popular option when other types of medications are not working.

Common side effects of sulfasalazine include stomach upset, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, as well as headaches and dizziness. You may also feel quite fatigued. An unusual effect can be the skin and urine turning orange-yellow, temporarily. It is also associated with temporary infertility in med, and may reduce the blood sugar drastically. The medication can also cause kidney issues, mood swings, hearing changes and sometimes, an allergic reaction.

There are even more severe effects for this type of medication, which occur rarely, including mouth sores, breathing difficulties, muscle pain, serious infections, seizures and liver failure.

Tofacitinib (Xeljanz): Tofacitinib prevents the immune response that makes arthritis so painful and reduces inflammation.

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The medication may cause diarrhea, headaches, and increases the risk of developing a dangerous infection. Urinary tract infections, nasopharyngitis, and upper respiratory infections are the most commonly seen.

What to Use Instead

Arthritis pain can be crippling, so you'll likely be tempted to take one or more of the above medications. If you prefer to skip the side effects, though, there are a few options that you can use to ease the pain and reduce inflammation in the joints.

Heat: Applying heat to irritated and swollen joints increases the blood flow to the area. This, in turn, can help reduce the inflammation and promote the body's natural healing process.

Frankincense: The simplest way to use this amazing plant is to get the essential oil and dilute it slightly to make a rub for sore joints. It can also be found in Boswellia creams and some tablets to help ease inflammation and pain.

Eucalyptus: This invigorating smelling plant has tannins that help reduce swelling in joints. It can be used in creams or as an oil (to be diluted). It can cause allergies in some people, so test it before spreading it everywhere. You can also apply heat after rubbing the oil or cream on your joints to enhance the effect.



Ginger: A heating herb, ginger poultices or oil applied to the affected joints will increase blood circulation, helping the body heal itself.

Turmeric: The yellow powder that is so frequently used in curry recipes can actually help reduce inflammation throughout the body. Add it to your food, smoothies, or make some golden milk to help ease pain long term.

: The original aspirin, willow bark helps with both pain and inflammation. You can make a tea of it, or simply chew on the bark to get the benefits. However, it can cause

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rashes if you over use it and anyone allergic to aspirin should stay away, as well as those who use blood thinners.

Combining a few of these solutions may help provide more relief than conventional medicines. For example, taking turmeric, applying eucalyptus, and applying heat can all work to give you a break from pain and swelling.



Chapter 4:

Blood Pressure

Medications

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Blood pressure medications come in a wide variety of types, depending on the cause of the high blood pressure. All of them can have serious side effects, but one of the biggest dangers is abruptly stopping the medication. You may be tempted to do just that when you see the side effects that each type of medicine has, but that would be a mistake.

When you've been taking medication to open the blood vessels or relax muscles and suddenly stop, the abrupt change can be very dangerous to your health. You'll need to talk to a doctor or other medical professional in order to move off the drug.

Natural methods of reducing blood pressure do exist. Sufficient hydration and a special diet can naturally reduce hypertension, as can an increase in exercise. Research alternatives to medication if you are able to, since it can be very difficult to get off medication once you begin.

ACE Inhibitors

These medications cause the blood vessels throughout your body to dilate or expand. This lowers pressure and also increases how much blood your heart can pump.

The most common ACE inhibitors include:

Benazepril (Lotensin): Those taking Benazepril have reported side effects that range from headaches, coughs, dizziness, and fatigue to insomnia, increased anxiety, constipation, nausea and vomiting and skin rashes and itchiness. More serious side effects include dark urine, bloating, fever, blistered skin, fainting, jaundice and confusion.

Enalapril (Vasotec): Commonly used for certain types of congestive heart failure, enalapril can cause chest pain, weakness, nausea and vomiting, a cough, rash and dizziness, as well as spike the potassium levels in your blood. It may also ruin your sense of taste, cause you to sleep more or less (insomnia) and can be the cause of itchy skin and diarrhea. In serious cases, you may notice that you are urinating more or less than usual or have the symptoms of an infection.

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Lisinopril (Prinivil, Zestril): Side effects for Lisinopril include dizziness, cough, headache, diarrhea, chest pain, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, psoriasis. It may also cause your potassium levels to spike and if mixed with hydrochlorothiazide, you may also experience stomach pains, skin rashes and a lack of appetite.

Alpha Blockers

This type of medication is designed to relax specific muscle types, which helps improve blood flow. Men with prostate issues may also be prescribed this type of medication to help improve urine flow.

Doxazosin (Cardura): Most commonly, users of Doxazosin will find they get dizzy and tired, and may suffer edema in the extremities, as well. Vertigo is another common effect, particularly when you first take the medication.

Prazosin (Minipress): This medication may cause dizziness, weakness and fatigue, headaches, heart palpitations, constipation and nausea. It may also cause edema, rashes, shortness of breath, fainting, and possible priapism.

Terazosin: Dizziness, fatigue, nausea and drowsiness are all common effects of this particular beta blocker. Patients may also notice they have more headaches, blurred vision and a stuffy nose. More severe effects include an allergic reaction, edema, weight gain, faster heart rates, burning in the hands and feet or fainting.

Beta Blockers

These medications slow the heart and help it pump a little gentler, which drops blood pressure. It is VERY important that you never stop taking beta blockers abruptly, as this can cause even more health issues, including a heart attack.

The most common beta blockers are:

Atenolol (Tenormin): Atenolol may be helpful in reducing blood pressure, but it increases your chance of memory loss, impotence, insomnia, fatigue, GI tract upsets, fever and depression. It can also cause slower heart rate and abdominal cramps.

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Some people even experience breathing trouble, as well as numbness and tingling in their extremities.

Bisoprolol (Zebeta): If you are on this medication, you may experience GI tract upsets, dizziness, anxiety, nausea, headaches and a lower headache. Some people feel like they have a cold or the flue, with stuffy nose and burning eyes. The most dangerous side effects range from an allergic reaction with hives and tongue swelling to chest pain and tremors, confusion, and breathing difficulties.

Metoprolol (Lopressor, Toprol-XL): When taking metoprolol, it's possible to experience dizziness, fatigue, GI tract upsets, breathing issues, slower heart rate, drop in libido or impotence, and a rash. More serious effects may include exhaustion, depression, dangerously slow heart rate, and cold extremities.

Nadolol (Corgard): Those taking nadolol may find that they are weaker and sleepier than usual. Dizziness and a cough may also be side effects, as well as cold hands and feet, thanks to reduced blood flow to the extremities. Serious effects include breathing difficulties, allergic reactions, fainting, irregular heartbeat or edema in the feet or ankles. Some people also find that they have mood swings and loss of memory. Confusion and vision changes can be common effects, as well.

Propranolol (InnoPran XL, Inderal LA): If you're taking propranolol, you may find that you have dry eyes, hair loss, nausea and vomiting, fatigue and diarrhea. It's also common to see slower heart rates in those taking this medication. Rashes, itchy skin or hives can be a sign that you're allergic to the medicine, while breathing issues, drops in blood sugar, and lack of circulation in the extremities, hallucinations, peeling skin, nightmares and edema can all signal further problems with the medication.

Calcium Channel Blockers

The medications in this section relax arterial blood vessel walls so that the blood can pass through easier and with less resistance. Common calcium channel blockers include:

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Amlodipine (Norvasc): Given to prevent angina, as well as reduce blood pressure, amlodipine may cause dizziness, edema in extremities, and flushing. Fainting, heart attack symptoms, chest pain, and trouble breathing are all side effects, as well. Some people will have serious allergic reactions to this medication, so watch for swelling of the tongue and face, hives, or red, dry eyes.

Diltiazem (Cardizem, Tiazac): If you're taking diltiazem for your blood pressure, you may experience low blood pressure, dizziness, nausea, headaches, constipation and edema. It's also possible to see a rash and liver problems, as well as a drop in libido. In some cases, it can also provoke heart failure.

Nifedipine (Procardia): Nifedipine is used to prevent angina/chest pain, but it can cause side effects like dizziness, lightheadedness, headaches, and constipation. It's also possible that you'll notice foot swelling or feel weak and you may even faint. In some cases, patients deal with serious allergic reactions or have the symptoms of a heart attack due to the medication, which include sweating, difficulty breathing and pain in the chest, jaw, or left arm.

Nisoldipine (Sular): This drug is designed to be slow release, so you should avoid chewing or breaking the tablet. It will release the full dose and that can increase your risk of side effects. The side effects include feeling dizzy, headaches, swollen feet and ankles and flushing. Fainting, shortness of breath, chest pain, and swelling of the mouth and tongue.

What to Use Instead

High blood pressure may be caused by a number of factors, but changes to your lifestyle can often help bring it down to safe levels.

Less Salt: Salt causes blood sugar to rise, so if you eat a lot of salty food, it will definitely affect you. Reduce the salt in your diet to reduce your pressure.

Lose Weight: Being overweight is a common cause of high blood pressure and dropping those extra pounds can actually help reduce your blood pressure readings.

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Eating a healthy diet not only helps with losing weight, it's also good for bringing your pressure down.

Drink Water: When you notice the symptoms of high blood pressure, including dizziness, try drinking a glass of cold water. It will bring the pressure down for the moment. However, ensuring that you are well hydrated is a big part of improving your heart health.

Willow Bark: Chewing some willow bark or drinking tea made from the bark on a daily basis will thin your blood and bring your pressure down. This requires monitoring, however, since it could bring your pressure down too far.



Cinnamon: This tasty spice has been associated with a drop in blood pressure when given as an extract, but many swear by its potential when taken as a powder, too. Add it to your coffee, tea, smoothies and breakfasts to get a dose of potentially lifesaving flavor.

Exercise: Getting more exercise helps your body stay healthy, dilates blood vessels, and aids in reducing blood pressure to a healthy level. Even 30 minutes of walking per day can do wonders.

Aromatherapy: If you find that you are frequently stressed, it's time to bring it down and your blood pressure along with it. Aromatherapy can help you stay calmer and eases stress, especially when you have frankincense or lavender in the air.

Before starting a routine of pills that you won't be able to quit any time soon, consider improving your lifestyle and bringing your pressure down naturally.



Chapter 5:

Blood Sugar

Medications

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Diabetes affects nearly 1 in 10 Americans and is the cause of 12% of deaths in the country. It is a disease that can affect anyone, but is particularly prevalent in the older generations and those dealing with obesity. The medications to treat this disease can have some pretty serious side effects, so lowering blood sugar naturally will reduce the need for medicine.

Exenatide (Byetta): This medication is a GLP-1 receptor agonist. It helps the body digest slower and lowers blood sugar levels, though mildly.

Side effects of exenatide tend to be stronger at higher doses, especially nausea and vomiting. Diarrhea, anxiety, stomach issues, and headaches are also common, as are acid reflux, lower appetite and excessive sweating.

Glimepiride (Amaryl): This medication helps the body produce more insulin on its own, but that can result in very low blood sugar.

Low blood sugar or hypoglycemia can cause irritability, sweating, hunger, fatigue and anxiety. Weight gain is another side effect, as are headaches, nausea, vomiting, weakness and dizziness.

Glyburide (Glynase, DiaBeta): Glyburide increases the body's natural production of insulin, enabling the pancreas to function a little more efficiently.

While taking the medication, it's possible you will have nausea and heartburn. Some patients gain weight while taking glyburide and may feel full in the stomach area, as well. If a patient taking this medication doesn't eat enough, they could end up with low blood sugar from the increased amount of insulin, which can cause sweating, tremors, rapid heartbeat, and blurred vision.

Insulin Therapy: Type 1 diabetes, where the pancreas no longer work at all, it's necessary to inject insulin. However, many doctors now prescribe insulin therapy for Type 2 diabetics, as well.

Insulin therapy can cause low blood sugar, which causes headaches, hunger, tremors, irritability, faster breathing and heartbeat. If it goes untreated, the hypoglycemia could cause seizures. Insulin must be injected and side effects can

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include itching, pain, swelling or redness at the point of injection. The skin may also thicken in the area.

Metformin (Glucophage): One of the most common medications used for Type 2 diabetes, this medication makes your body more sensitive to insulin. This, in turn, helps the body utilize the small amount of insulin produced more effectively. Metformin also keeps the liver from overproducing glucose.

Side effects of metformin include nausea, vomiting, stomach upsets, and diarrhea, especially early on. Patients may feel weak and may end up with a metal taste in the mouth.

What to Use Instead

High blood sugar can be very dangerous, but the medications aren't always a good idea either. Try these more natural methods of getting your blood sugar under control. NOTE: These methods are for Type 2 diabetes. If you have Type 1, you will need insulin.

Count Carbs: Rather than rely on medication to control your insulin, focus on your carbohydrate intake. Everyone is different, so you may need to test your blood regularly in the beginning to figure out how much you need. Keep in mind that your carbs should be complex, so opt for whole grains whenever possible.

Water: Pure water helps flush the sugar out of your body and is an essential part of bringing your blood sugar levels down. Drink a minimum of 8 glasses a day, but more is better.

Fiber: The main reason whole grains are good for diabetics is that they contain plenty of fiber, which helps maintain a steady level of blood sugars. Try to include at least 30 grams of fiber in your food each and every day.

Sleep: The more sleep you get, the better your body handles making insulin. For those who sleep poorly, it may be more difficult to keep your blood sugars stable. Ideally, you'll get 7-9 hours per night.

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Reducing blood sugar requires more than simply cutting sugar out of your diet, but it doesn't always mean taking heavy duty medications.



Chapter 6:

Cholesterol

Medications

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When we talk about high cholesterol, it's usually referring to "bad" or LDL cholesterol. There are a number of prescription drugs designed to reduce the amount of cholesterol in your body, but they do have side effects. It's best to focus on what you can do naturally to reduce this health problem.

Exercise and diet are two ways to improve cholesterol levels. They can also help a myriad of other health issues, so focus on the natural before you resort to the chemical. However, if you do end up on cholesterol medication, you should know the associated risks.

Alirocumab (Praluent): Alirocumab is a relatively new type of drug from a class called PCSK9 inhibitors. These drugs reduce the amount of LDL cholesterol in the blood.

When taking the drug, you may notice muscle pain, diarrhea, muscle spasms, and flue like symptoms. It can also cause liver problems in many cases and increases the probability of urinary tract infections. As a new drug, it's possible there are long term effects that have not yet come to light.

Atorvastatin (Lipitor): This medication is fairly mild, so it is used alongside a good diet and lifestyle changes to reduce the amount of bad cholesterol (LDL), while raising the amount of good cholesterol (HDL).

Some patients notice mild memory loss or confusion. In severe cases, the drug can cause muscle problems, including pain, weakness and spasms. It may also increase the likelihood of kidney issues or liver problems. Watch for decreased urine output or dark urine, nausea and vomiting and a yellow tinge to the eyes or skin.

Cholestyramine (Prevalite): Cholestyramine binds to bile, which is made from cholesterol, forcing the body to excrete it. Usually, bile continues to circulate in the body, allowing the cholesterol to build up. This way, it is completely eliminated from the body and the liver must turn other LDL cholesterol into bile acid.

This medication may cause constipation, pain in the abdomen, diarrhea, gas, bloating and vomiting. It also increases the risk of developing gallstones, gastric

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ulcers, and gastrointestinal bleeding. Long term use has been associated with a vitamin A deficiency, as well.

Colestipol (Colestid): Like cholestyramine, colestipol binds to the bile in the body and eliminates it from the body. This drops the levels of LDL cholesterol in the body and forces the liver to convert cholesterol into bile acids.

Constipation is the most common side effect of this medication, but it is also possible to have diarrhea with it. Abdominal pain/cramps, indigestion, gas, diarrhea and nausea are a few other common effects of the medicine. More severe side effects include inflamed gallbladder or formation of gallstones, intestinal blockage or esophageal obstruction and ulcers.

Ezetimibe (Zetia): Ezetimibe stops the body from absorbing cholesterol in the intestines. It's usually used in combination with a statin drug or lifestyle changes.

It may cause a headache, dizziness, sore throat, sneezing, joint pain, hoarseness and a runny nose, as well as diarrhea. More serious effects could include extreme fatigue, hives, a rash, swelling of the extremities or face and throat, difficulty breathing, bruising, muscle weakness, fever, chills, and chest pain.

Fenofibrate: This medication helps increase the body's natural enzymes to break down fats and eliminate LDL cholesterol. It's usually used in combination with a low fat diet and other lifestyle changes for best results.

While side effects are minimal with fenofibrate, they can be severe. Persistent nausea and stomach pain may indicate gallstones or a liver issue. Vomiting, loss of appetite and yellow skin or eyes, along with dark urine indicates the liver could be failing. It may also increase your risk of developing an infection or an allergic reaction.

Fluvastatin (Lescol): Fluvastatin prevents the liver from producing as much cholesterol, which in turn, reduces the amount of cholesterol in the blood stream.

Having an upset stomach is the most common issue with this medication. It may also contribute to confusion or mild memory loss. If you suffer from diabetes, Fluvastatin can make it worse and in some cases, it may increase your risk of developing the

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disease. Other side effects include muscle pain and weakness, fever, and liver problems, signaled by yellowing skin and eyes, dark urine and nausea with vomiting.

Lovastatin: This medication helps stop the liver from producing so much cholesterol, which effectively reduces the amount in the blood.

In some cases, Lovastatin may cause or make diabetes worse, so it's a good idea to find out if you are at risk. It can also cause liver problems and muscle issues. Liver failure is characterized by yellowing skin and eyes, dark urine and nausea with vomiting.

Rosuvastatin (Crestor): Like other statins, rosuvastatin reduces the amount of cholesterol produced by the liver, stopping it at the source. It's usually used in combination with lifestyle and diet changes.

Confusion and memory loss may be issues when taking this medication. It can also cause or worsen diabetes, so it's best to know if you are at risk. In severe reactions, you could end up with liver problems, noted by yellow eyes and skin, dark urine, stomach pain and vomiting. You may also notice kidney issues, with foamy urine or changes in how much urine output there is. Muscle pain and tenderness may also be an issue.

What to Use Instead

Did you know that you can sometimes lower your cholesterol levels without even touching regular meds? While it does require some changes to your lifestyle, the results are worth it.

Cut Fats: Saturated fats are the main cause of high cholesterol, so prevent it from skyrocketing by avoiding these fats, which are found in many dairy products and vegetable oils. Avoid refined carbohydrates and sugar, as well, since these actually cause the liver to create cholesterol.

Fiber: Include lots of fiber in your diet to bring down cholesterol levels. It binds with the cholesterol as you eat and whisks it out of the body safely. If your own diet isn't enough, add some psyllium powder to your meals.

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Lose Weight: Again, having a healthy body weight will help reduce cholesterol levels. Eat healthy food and drink plenty of water to help maintain your lower weight. Regular exercise can also help.

Plant Sterols: These plant derived supplements are ideal for reducing cholesterol levels and are completely natural. Take one or two grams a day for best results.

Reducing your intake of cholesterol can help keep levels down, as can reducing your weight and blood pressure to healthy levels. It's best to do this naturally wherever possible to avoid the effects of the standard medications.



Chapter 7:

Cortisteroids

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Your body naturally produces corticosteroids, like hydrocortisone and cortisone, but in some cases, the adrenal glands are unable to produce the right amount of these natural steroids. Replacement corticosteroids may be necessary in these cases, or they may be prescribed in large amounts to help treat specific diseases and health conditions.

Corticosteroids are used to treat arthritis, asthma, bronchitis and colitis, as well as any inflammation or allergy that affects the nose and eyes. The steroids may also be used to help autoimmune issues and skin rashes.

Bethamethasone (Celestone): Bethamethasone is available in several forms, including topical and injectable. It is often used for arthritis, skin and eye problems, and blood disorders.

In some cases, this medication may cause an anaphylactic reaction where the face and throat swell up and breathing is cut off. Less serious effects include stretch marks, excessive hair growth, pimples, trembling, dizziness, and tiredness. It can also result in low potassium levels which cause muscle cramps, and may increase blood sugar levels. Headaches, nausea, blurred vision and sweating, along with weight gain, may also occur.

As a steroid, this medication puts you at higher risk for developing an infection, thanks to its immune suppressing properties.

Dexamethasone (DexPak, Intensol): This medication can be used for skin and eye conditions, breathing issues, immune disorders, arthritis and more. However, as a steroid, it reduces the effectiveness of your immune system, making you more prone to infection.

Dexamethasone may cause headaches and dizziness, insomnia, stomach problems and weight gain as one of the minor side effects. More serious effects include skin thinning, seizures, slow healing, mood swings, hair growth, muscle pain, and joint pain. You may also notice that you get more infections and more serious infections than before.

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Fludrocortisone (Florinef): Fludrocortisone is a synthetic version of glucocorticoid and is prescribed when the body isn't producing enough of the substance on its own. Glucocorticoids help maintain a balance of water and salt in the diet and maintain blood pressure, as well as breaking down carbohydrates.

Side effects include changes to menstruation in women, headaches, stomach problems and abdominal pain. More serious issues may occur in some cases, such as extreme fatigue, weight gain, muscle pain and weakness and signs of infection, including fevers, sore throat, and skin lesions. Some patients may be allergic to the medication.

Methylprednisolone (Medrol): Designed to treat arthritis, eye conditions, diseases of the lungs and skin, as well as kidneys, this medication is a commonly prescribed steroid and may be combined with other types of medications.

Methylprednisolone may cause nausea and vomiting, as well as insomnia, appetite changes, headaches, heartburn, acne, and excessive sweating. In those at risk for diabetes, the medication can either cause it or worsen the problem. It is also an immune suppressant, meaning you may end up with more infections and illnesses than normal. In some cases, bleeding in the stomach or intestines may occur, as well as bruising and mood swings. Some patients may experience depression, edema, thin skin, hair growth and changes in heart rhythm.

Prednisone: Used in cases where the body is dealing with inflammation, such as arthritis, colitis, asthma and Crohn's disease, prednisone is often used as in lung infections, too. It is an addictive substance, meaning it needs to be tapered off rather than abruptly stopped.

Side effects of abrupt withdrawal may include nausea, vomiting, weakness, fatigue, weight loss, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. Taking the drug as prescribed with the taper may reduce these effects, but it has its own side effects, including weight gain, rise in blood pressure, water retention, headaches, acne, vomiting and nausea, restlessness, insomnia, and skin thinning. You may also notice puffiness in the face,

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ulcers, and the growth of facial hair. Wounds may take longer to heal and some patients develop cataracts or glaucoma.

Triamcinolone (Aristospan): Usually in the form of a topical cream, this medication is used to treat skin conditions like eczema, dermatitis, and more. There is also an oral form, but it is not as likely to be prescribed.

Early symptoms may include irritation and dryness on the application site. Burning skin and itching is also a common effect. It's possible to see ingrown hairs, excessive hair growth, skin thinning, discoloration of the skin and stretch marks, as well. If absorbed into the blood stream, patients may notice fatigue, vision problems, edema, and headaches.

What to Use Instead

Corticosteroids help reduce inflammation, which is their main purpose in doctor's prescriptions. Unfortunately, the side effects can be pretty drastic, so it's best to avoid these medicines if possible. Here are your best alternatives:

Turmeric Extract: Using turmeric in your food is a great way to reduce some inflammation, but if you're looking at steroids, you likely need something a bit stronger. Turmeric extract increases the potency to boost the anti-inflammatory properties.

Licorice Root: Use this natural root to stop the body from breaking down its own cortisol. Instead, it increases the anti-inflammatory effect of the chemical produced by the body. Licorice root can, however, cause an increase in blood pressure, so this should be monitored. Take an extract or make a tea from the root.



Serrapeptase: Made from silkworms, this enzyme works incredibly well to dissolve mucus and alleviate bronchitis and sinusitis. It is also used to make chemo treatments more effective against cancer, so can be used in place of those steroids, too.

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Bromelain: Pineapples are the source of this enzyme, but you'll probably want to get the actual enzyme, rather than eat a huge amount of pineapple. It can ease tendinitis and is used wherever there are physical injuries to muscles and tissues.

Pancreatin: This enzyme functions much like serrapeptase, but comes from pigs. It is an effective treatment for any type of inflammation dependent disease.

There are alternatives for nearly every type of medication, including steroids. With these natural methods, reduce inflammation and increase treatment effectivity.



Chapter 8:

Diuretics

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You may hear diuretics referred to as water pills, as they tend to cause frequent and excessive urination. The medications are meant to eliminate the salt and excess fluid from the body through urine. There are a few reasons you may be prescribed this type of treatment.

Any time edema is present in the body, diuretics may be used to flush out the extra fluid build up. The actual edema may be caused by anything from congestive heart failure to high blood pressure.

Amiloride (Midamor): This diuretic helps preserve potassium levels and lowers blood pressure. It is frequently used with other diuretics to increase effectiveness and can be used to treat heart failure, as well.

Amiloride may cause headaches, dizziness, gas, pain in the stomach and diarrhea. It also has an effect of nausea or vomiting. If taken with other medications, it may cause dehydration, which is noted by dry mouth, dizziness, fainting and weakness, along with muscle cramps. In rare cases, kidneys may be affected, resulting in dark urine.

Bumetanide (Bumex): This medication is usually prescribed when liver or kidney disease or heart failure has caused an excess of fluid throughout the body. It eliminates excess water and salt.

Side effects of this medication commonly include dizziness, but may also cause dehydration, muscle cramps, fatigue, fainting, drowsiness, dry mouth, nausea and vomiting, as well as a fast heartbeat. In some rare cases, swelling of the extremities, numbness or hearing loss may signify a bad reaction to the medication.

Chlorothiazide (Diuril): Any type of edema may be treated by this medication, including congestive heart failure, liver or kidney disease, or reactions to steroids and hormones. It is also useful in treating high blood pressure.

Chlorothiazide may make you more sensitive to the sun, cause muscle weakness and spasms, dizziness and vertigo. You may also notice a drop in libido, thinning of hair, constipation, bruising and unusual bleeding. Liver involvement will be noted by yellowing of eyes and skin, as well as dark urine. More severe issues include

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shortness of breath, sore throat, seizures and increased blood sugar, as well as difficulty breathing.

Ethacrynic Acid (Edecrin): This is a loop diuretic, commonly used to reduce high blood pressure and eliminate swelling from heart failure, or liver and kidney disease.

Ethacrynic acid may cause weakness, diarrhea, stomach pain, dizziness, and muscle cramps. Due to the strong diuretic effect, it is possible to enter into a state of dehydration, where fainting, dizziness, irregular heartbeat and confusion may be seen. Some more extreme cases show hearing loss, vertigo, and worsening of liver problems, including dark urine and yellowing eyes and skin.

Furosemide (Lasix): Furosemide is injectable and use to reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack, as well as kidney problems. It may be used when high blood pressure causes difficulty breathing and edema.

Side effects of this particular diuretic include blurred vision, upset stomach, headache, dizziness, and constipation. In some cases, you may end up dehydrated if too much liquid is expelled. This can cause a dry mouth, vertigo, weakness, confusion and extreme thirst, as well as fainting and seizures.

Hydrochlorothiazide (Esidrex, Oretic, Dichlotride): Usually prescribed for high blood pressure, hydrochlorothiazide expels excess liquid and salt from the body.

This medication is likely to cause headaches and dizziness, as well as an upset stomach in the beginning. Eye pain and blurred vision can also be side effects, as well as dehydration, extreme thirst, muscle cramps, weakness, and confusion.

Metolazone (Zaroxolyn): For those dealing with high blood pressure, kidney disease, or congestive heart failure, metolazone is commonly prescribed to eliminate excess liquid in the system.

The most common side effects of this medication are stomach upsets, lack of appetite, blurred vision, dizziness, and headaches. These may reduce once the body is accustomed to the medication. If dehydration and loss of minerals occurs, patients

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may experience confusion, nausea and vomiting, irregular heart rate, fainting, dry mouth, and seizures.

Spironolactone (Aldactone): Commonly used to treat heart failure and high blood pressure, spironolactone eliminates water from the body without lowering potassium levels. It's known as a potassium-sparing diuretic.

When taking this medication, it's not unusual to have dizziness, stomach issues, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and headaches. Kidney problems may be exacerbated, while libido may be reduced and signs of infection, as well as severe abdominal pain. It's also possible that potassium levels will rise too high with the medication, so watch for slow heartbeat and muscle weakness.

What to Use Instead

You may want to start off with natural diuretics before turning to the prescription versions. To avoid excessive side effects, try the following remedies:

Hawthorn: Hawthorn berries are nutritious, but also function well as a diuretic. When taken in a tea, hawthorn helps eliminate fluid edema.

Juniper: This unusual herb is used to flavor meat in some dishes, but it can also act as a natural fluid reducer, by increasing urine output. The biggest benefit is that it preserves potassium while helping the body eliminate excess liquids.

Hibiscus: A beautiful flower for the garden, roselle hibiscus can also be made into a tea that will stimulate kidney filtration and increase fluid output in a rather delicious way.

Dandelion Root: Turn dandelion root into a tea or "coffee" to have a natural diuretic handy. While many see the plant as a weed, it can be harvested and put to good use.

When using any kind of diuretic, natural or chemical, be sure to drink plenty of pure water in order to stay hydrated.



Chapter 9:

Painkillers

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Chronic or acute pain may require relief and your doctor may prescribe a painkiller to help reduce the amount of pain. Depending on the type of medication, it could be a very strong dose or just something to take the edge off.

Commonly prescribed and over the counter pain medications include:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol): Nearly everyone has this common medication in their medicine cabinet. It's used to treat aches and pains, headaches, back pain and to reduce fever. However, it does come with some potential dangers.

Acetaminophen is usually considered to have no side effects, but it can cause allergies in some people. It is also dangerous to your liver in large amounts.

Codeine: A strong pain reliever, codeine is a narcotic that is commonly prescribed for persistent coughs or pains. It is usually combined with another painkiller, like acetaminophen.

Side effects of using codeine include dizziness, nausea and vomiting and possible constipation. It also has been linked to rashes and abdominal pain. However, more dangerous effects have been reported, such as shortness of breath, sedation, very low blood pressure, and reduced breathing. It also addictive and may cause issues if taken long term.

Fentanyl: For patients with severe, chronic pain, such as with cancer or similar diseases, fentanyl may be prescribed. This narcotic is usually used as a transdermal patch.

As a narcotic, fentanyl is addictive and can cause withdrawal symptoms if stopped abruptly. It may cause nausea and vomiting, constipation, dizziness and headaches. More serious side effects include hallucinations, poor coordination loss of balance, difficulty urinating, weight loss and agitation.

Hydrocodone (Vicodin): This medication is only used for patients with ongoing pain that is very severe, particularly when other types of pain management have not worked or cannot be used for whatever reason.

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If you're taking hydrocodone, it's likely that you'll experience one or more of the following issues, including stomach pain, fatigue, pain in the head or back, ringing in the ears, insomnia, edema in the legs and feet, tremors, muscle tightening. The more serious issues include chest pain, hallucinations, nausea and vomiting, loss of voice, itchy skin, difficulty breathing and difficulty swallowing.

Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nurofen): Ibuprofen is frequently used for headaches, fever and joint pain, as well as arthritis and menstrual cramps. It is an anti-inflammatory, so can be used to reduce swelling and inflammation, as well as pain and fever.

Common side effects of ibuprofen include stomach pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea or constipation. It can also cause headaches in some cases, but one of the most dangerous side effects is a rise in blood pressure. Ibuprofen may also increase risk of kidney problems, heart failure and mood swings. Dark urine, yellowed skin or eyes and abdominal pain may indicate that the ibuprofen has contributed to liver disease, as well.

Oxycodone (Percocet, OxyContin): One of the few drugs that has black box warnings, oxycodone is considered highly addictive. It is used as a pain killer for moderate and severe pain and can cause serious interactions with benzodiazepine drugs.

Nausea and vomiting, headaches, dizziness, drowsiness, weakness, itchy skin and dry mouth are just a few of the minor effects of oxycodone. It may also cause dry mouth, sweating and can interrupt sleep cycles. More severe effects include a drop in blood pressure, seizures and shallow or slow breathing, which may become dangerous.

Morphine: As an opioid analgesic, morphine changes the way your brain interprets pain. It is used in cases where pain is fairly severe usually and is quite addictive.

Morphine is well known for causing constipation, but it can also cause sweating, dizziness, vomiting, nausea and drowsiness. In severe cases, it may slow breathing,

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cause seizures and fainting or even hallucinations. Some people lose a significant amount of weight and have no energy, but end up agitated and confused.

Tramadol (Ultram, Conzip): As a narcotic, tramadol is a controlled substance. It has been linked to hundreds of overdose deaths every year. It also interacts with a large number of medications, including antibiotics, blood pressure and heart medications.

Side effects for this drug may be fairly severe, including increased heart rate, chest pain, fainting, facial swelling, severe rashes, depression and suicidal tendencies, vomiting, and hallucinations. It may also cause sweating, agitation, diarrhea, itchy skin, tremors, and dry mouth, as well as a loss of appetite. Senior citizens are at particularly high risk of side effects.

What to Use Instead

Long before chemical painkillers were available, people used natural ones. You can still manage your pain in many cases by turning to a more natural method.

Ginger: This anti-inflammatory has been shown to be even more effective than ibuprofen when it comes to relieving pain. Ginger actually blocks inflammatory compounds from being produced by the body and keeps pain to a minimum.

Capsaicin: Commonly known as the chemical from hot peppers, this compound can be applied as a cream or gel to the area where pain is most intense. It works best for nerve and muscle pain, as well as joint pain.



Frankincense: Take the oil of the boswellia plant internally or apply it topically to help reduce pain and inflammation throughout the body. Not only does it help with pain relief, it smells amazing, too.

Willow Bark: Willow bark tea contains salicin, which turns into salicylic acid when taken internally. It functions like aspirin, but without the stomach irritation. Take it as a tea or a tincture for more potency.

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Valerian Root: Usually considered a tension reliever, valerian root also blocks nerves and makes them less sensitive to pain. Made into a tea, it can be a great addition to your natural medicine cabinet.

Keeping a number of natural painkilling remedies on hand will help you avoid reaching for the more processed and chemical options out there.



Chapter 10:

Respiratory

Medications (COPD, Pneumonia, Asthma)

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Respiratory problems are a growing issue and can be terrifying. When you're unable to breathe properly, it can be very scary. In some cases, these respiratory problems are chronic, such as asthma or COPD, but in others, they may be acute, like bronchitis or pneumonia. Either way, doctors have an array of medications that they are more than happy to prescribe for these types of health problems.

Some popular options for treating respiratory diseases include steroids, which are covered in the section on corticosteroids and antibiotics, in the antibiotics section. The other medications are listed below.

Bronchodilators

These medications are frequently given in an inhaler. They alleviate coughing and shortness of breath by relaxing the muscles in the airways. These are the most commonly prescribed medications for respiratory issues.

Aclidinium (Tudorza): This medication must be used on a regular basis for chronic issues. It's commonly prescribed for COPD and emphysema and has a delayed effect. Aclidinium is not suitable for fast relief of acute symptoms.

Side effects may include worsening of breathing problems immediately after use, painful urination, eye pain and swelling, vision changes, and some people also end up with a severe allergic reaction that requires immediate medical attention.

Albuterol (Ventolin, ProAir): For fast relief of breathing symptoms, albuterol is a quick acting medication that opens the breathing passages and helps relax muscles. It may be available in tablet form, as well as inhaler.

Albuterol can raise your blood pressure and may cause headaches, nausea, dry mouth, tremors, anxiety, and dizziness. More serious side effects include heart changes, chest pain, rapid breathing, and confusion. Some may experience allergic reactions, as well as worsening breathing symptoms in rare cases.

Formoterol (Foradil, Perforomist): A long acting bronchodilator, formoterol is generally used for chronic lung issues, such as COPD or severe asthma or lung disease. It helps relax the muscles around air passages and improves breathing.

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Common side effects of this medication include nausea, dry mouth, headaches, fatigue, insomnia and tremors. It's also possible that it will raise your blood pressure over time, requiring monitoring. Chest pain, fainting and worse breathing problems are some of the more dangerous effects that may occur with formoterol.

Ipratropium (Atrovent): For patients with ongoing lung disease, ipratropium may be prescribed. It needs to be used regularly in order to be effective and is no use in a situation where you need immediate relief.

Common side effects of this bronchodilator include dizziness and nausea, as well as dry mouth and stomach upset. Some people may experience constipation. In rare cases, it may also cause worsening of the breathing problem, requiring immediate medical aid.

Expectorants

Coughing is meant to serve a purpose. It is a forceful expulsion of air from the lungs, usually bringing up phlegm or mucus. It can occur when the airway is irritated, as well. Acute coughs are generally caused by a postnasal drip, upper respiratory infection like pneumonia or bronchitis, or COPD. Chronic or ongoing coughs can be caused by reflux or GERD, irritated tissues after an infection is gone, or chronic infections. In any of these cases, an expectorant can help you get the phlegm out and calm down the cough.

Acetylcysteine (Mucomyst): This expectorant may be inhaled to help thin mucus in the airways. This aids the body in loosening the mucus and expelling it from the lungs, making it easier to breathe. It is particularly popular when treating COPD.

The most common side effects of the inhaled version of this medication are nausea and vomiting. You may also develop mouth sores or a runny nose. More serious issues can include chest pain, a tight feeling in the chest and difficulties breathing. Allergic reactions are rare, but possible.

Guaifenesin (Robitussin, Mucinex): This medication is commonly prescribed for a cough that comes from a regular cold or minor upper respiratory infection.

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Side effects are fairly rare with guaifenesin, but may include nausea and vomiting, headache, or rash.

Other Respiratory Medications

Sometimes, doctors prescribe other types of medication for lung troubles and these all come with their own risks. Here are some of the more common options.

Fluticasone (Flonase, Veramyst): This is a form of corticosteroids that reduces the swelling and irritation in the lungs and airways and is inhaled. It can also come in nasal spray, ointment, and cream, but for the purposes of COPD and other respiratory illnesses, doctors will prescribe the inhaler.

Side effects of fluticasone include irritation in the throat, hoarseness, cough, headaches, and sinus infection. It can also cause further inflammation of the upper airway and extended use may result in thrush or candidiasis.

Roflumilast (Daliresp): This medicine is taken orally and is a phosphodiesterase-4 inhibitor that reducing inflammation in the airways and helps relax them. It's specifically for severe COPD and chronic bronchitis.

Those who take roflumilast may experience diarrhea, weight loss, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, headaches, and dizziness. It's also possible to experience mood changes, depression, thoughts of suicide, insomnia, and fast heartbeat, as well as tremors.

Theophylline: Available in generic form only, theophylline is usually prescribed for emphysema, chronic bronchitis, or asthma and is designed for long term treatment. It works to relax and open the airways, allowing for easier breathing.

Side effects include insomnia and headaches. Nausea and vomiting indicate there is an overabundance of theophylline in the system, but other effects that are common with the right dosage include irregular heartrate, dizziness, seizures, chest pain and tremors.



What to Use Instead

Dealing with difficulty breathing? Whether it's caused by asthma, COPD, or something else, you can look to nature to provide an alternative to chemical treatments.

Breathing Techniques: Using your diaphragm to breathe can help eliminate the shortness of breath that you may feel. However, there are a number of breathing techniques that may work, including pursed lip breathing.

Water: Mucus can cause a feeling of suffocation and shortness of breath. It can also make you cough a lot. Drinking plenty of water and staying super hydrated will allow the mucus to remain thin and it will be easier to cough up.

Humidifier: This is just another method of ensuring your body is hydrated, by providing water from outside the body. It can really help loosen mucus in the chest and sinuses.

Ginseng: Take a ginseng supplement or drink it in tea to gain the benefits of this Chinese medicine. It can help open up your airways, improving the effectiveness of your lungs and reducing bacterial infections.

Eucalyptus: This plant is a powerful treatment for COPD. It can boost your lung function and helps reduce shortness of breath. It also acts as an anti-inflammatory for your airways. Try using the essential oil in a diffuser or humidifier to reap the benefits.

Of course, it stands to reason that you'll also want to avoid any lung irritants, such as chemicals or smoke. Try combining more than one of these treatments to see more impressive results.



Chapter 11:

Other Medications

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You'll come across many other medications, but in this book, we're focusing on the most commonly prescribed and taken medications. Here are three more that are fairly common when it comes to senior health.

Cetirizine (Zyrtec): This medication is usually used to prevent allergy symptoms, such as dry nose and itchy, red eyes. However, it does have some unpleasant side effects that may pop up.

These effects include tiredness and drowsiness, stomach pain, or dry mouth. In some cases, you may notice a rash, weakness, or difficulty urinating.

A combination of peppermint, lemon, and lavender essential oils has been shown to be effective in aiding the body as it fights off allergies.

Estrogen (Estrace): This hormone replacement is frequently prescribed for menopausal symptoms, including vaginal dryness, urinary tract irritation and other similar issues. It doesn't come without side effects, however.

Estrogen may cause bloating and stomach cramps, breast tenderness, headaches, weight gain or loss, nausea and vomiting, or darkening of skin on the face. For those who are in peri-menopause, it may cause breakthrough bleeding or changes in the periods. Some women find that their hair also falls out when taking estrogen.

Natural sources of estrogen include soybeans and derivatives of this, including tofu. Flaxseeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds all contain high levels of estrogen, too.

Sildenafil (Viagra): Popular among older men, sildenafil relaxes blood vessel muscles to increase the flow of blood to the genitals in men. It reacts badly with nitrate meds.

Some people experience prolonged erection, which can cause ongoing pain and damage. It can also react badly with any medications for blood pressure, whether high or low. The medication can cause chest pain or pressure, changes in the vision, hearing loss, irregular heartbeat, edema in the extremities, convulsions, lack of breath and fainting, as well as nose bleeds, muscle pain.

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Natural alternatives to help with erectile dysfunction include DHEA and ginseng supplements, which may boost blood flow.

Tadalafil (Cialis): Another drug for erectile dysfunction, tadalafil can be used for prostate issues, just like sildenafil. It's also quite popular among older men who may be experiencing erectile issues.

Like sildenafil, the medication can cause prolonged erections, dizziness, ringing in the ears, changes to vision or even blindness, as well as heart attack symptoms. You may also deal with flushing, headaches, and nausea.

Natural alternatives to help with erectile dysfunction include DHEA and ginseng supplements, which may boost blood flow.

Zanamivir (Relenza): This inhaled drug is meant to prevent the flu by blocking neuraminidase, which spreads viruses from infected to healthy cells. The drug helps keep the flu symptoms to a minimum and reduces the duration of the illness.

Potential side effects include diarrhea, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, headaches, and an ongoing cough. Rarer, but still serious effects include fever, changes in appetite, rashes, joint or muscle pain and weakness. Some people also have an allergic reaction to the medication.

Oregano oil is a natural antiviral and will help the body fight off the flu if you want to go with a more natural option.



Chapter 12:

Avoiding

Interactions

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Nearly 7,000 people die every year, the majority of them over 70 years of age, due to adverse drug reactions. It's very common for medications to interact with each other and doctors or pharmacies won't always catch the interaction in time.

It's essential that you stay on top of your own medications and check for potential interactions. The simplest method of doing this is to keep a list of medications that you take, along with dosages and amounts. Whenever you see a doctor, let them know what you're taking and specifically ask about interactions.

However, you can't rely on the doctor and pharmacists to notice interactions between medications. Though they've studied for years, there are millions of medications and it is literally impossible to memorize all the possible interactions and effects. This is where some good old fashioned research comes in.

Take the time to research each and every medicine you are given. Look carefully at potentially dangerous mixes.

Alcohol Counts as a Drug

One of the biggest causes of drug interactions is alcohol. It's dangerous to drink if you're taking medication that could react with the alcohol. In some cases, the alcohol will reduce the effect of the medication, which can be a very bad thing when it comes to blood pressure or blood sugar meds. In other cases, it will increase your chances of side effects, which is also dangerous.

Before taking any medication with alcohol, double check that it's safe. When in doubt, skip the booze and have a non-alcoholic drink, instead.

Natural Remedies Can Interact, Too

Just because you're taking something natural doesn't mean it's safe. In fact, some herbal remedies can interact with drugs just like another medication. Include your natural remedies in the list of medications you are taking and be sure to check for yourself that there will be no problems taking them.

Doctors and the medical system can be helpful, but only to a certain extent. They are processing and diagnosing large numbers of people on a daily basis, making it vital

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that people take their health into their own hands. Educate yourself and make sure you know exactly what side effects might occur with any medication you are prescribed.

One last thing . . . never be afraid to question your doctor. It could save your life.