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INDEPENDENT, OBJECTIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED

What's new

Collecting, evaluating, deciding: How to make use of medical knowledge

Have you ever wondered why there are hardly any recommendations at Informed Health Online? In our in-depth feature we take a look at Peter and Karl – two middle-aged men who both have been diagnosed with high blood pressure – to show you why we prefer to not give specific advice. We instead see our role as looking at the available evidence to provide you with medical knowledge so that you can make your own decisions. But we'll let you be the judge. To the feature (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/treatment-options.667.56.en.l>

Birth control pill: Is weight gain just a myth?

This myth has been especially hard to dispel: women who use the pill gain weight. Yet there has never been any scientific proof of this – and it remains unproven to the present day. Our updated information explains what might have caused people to believe in the extra pounds theory and why it is so difficult to convince them otherwise. More (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.453.en.html>)

Regaining strength and fitness: What can help after a stroke

Even after a stroke, physical fitness shouldn't be taken lightly. Being fit helps you do exercises that benefit recovery. Read our revised information about what current trials on the benefit of exercise as part of stroke rehabilitation have to say. More (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.598.en.html>)

Ankle instability: Finding the best treatment

A moment's carelessness and it has already happened: your ankle is twisted. This can sometimes result in chronic ankle instability. One possible cause is that the ligaments have grown back together too loosely. There is no reliable answer as to whether surgery is better than physiotherapy based on the latest research – but we can say which treatment will get you back on your feet faster if you have had surgery. To the updated research summary (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.465.en.html>)

Tasting, swallowing, speaking: This is how the tongue works

Many people still believe that we taste “sweet” on the tip of the tongue, and “bitter” in the area close to the throat – but this is wrong. We know today that our sense of taste is spread rather evenly over the tongue. Science has also found out what other types of taste we can sense. Find out what “umami” is and what other jobs the tongue does in this feature (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.914.56.en.html>) .

Bowel cancer screening: Yes? No? Maybe?

Campaigns regularly draw attention to bowel cancer screening. But how big is the risk of getting bowel cancer and even dying of it? And how can screening change it? You can find detailed information on the advantages and disadvantages of the tests and how they are done in this article (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.797.en.html>) .

At a glance: Detecting bowel cancer and its preliminary stages

For those readers who prefer to get a quick overview first, we have summarized the most important information on bowel cancer screening. More (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.799.en.html>)

Newer drug for treating high cholesterol levels: Benefits not clear

High cholesterol – a lot of people worry about it. With good reason, because it is considered to be a risk factor for cardiovascular disease like heart attacks and strokes. If cholesterol levels do not go down enough as a result of a healthier diet or more exercise it is possible to use medication. A newer drug can apparently lower cholesterol levels. But does it also help to prevent complications? To the research summary (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.796.en.html>)

Moderate or near normal: New information on lowering blood sugar levels in type 2 diabetes

Experts agree: lowering blood sugar levels is fundamentally a good thing to do for people who have type 2 diabetes. Yet the best treatment strategy is open to debate: some advise aiming for “near normal” levels, while others recommend lowering blood sugar less. Is one of these two strategies better? We have put together information on what the research says here. To the research summary (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.792.en.html>)

Skin cancer: On the benefits of one imaging technique in malignant melanoma

Malignant melanoma is quite rare, but it is more aggressive than other kinds of skin cancer. Some experts believe that it can be better treated, when it can be determined with more accuracy how far it has spread or whether there are recurrences. Can a positron emission tomography (PET) scan help in doing this? To the research summary (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.794.en.html>)

Good to know: Preventing gingivitis and its consequences

Bleeding gums are usually harmless. But they are sometimes an indication of gingivitis (inflammation of the gums). We explain how gingivitis is caused and what treatment options are available if the inflammation has already affected other parts of the tissue supporting the teeth. To the fact sheet (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.790.en.html>)

Treatment after a heart attack: Combinations with ASA

There are a number of different drugs available for treating and preventing heart attacks. Trials now show that a drug that was introduced in 2009 can reduce the risk of further non-fatal heart attacks better than an older drug. However, the new drug also has some disadvantages. More (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.791.en.html>)

Babies and children: What can you do about acute middle ear infection?

Most parents are familiar with this situation: a child in pain and screaming a lot at night can be very unsettling. This is frequently caused by acute middle ear infection. This video (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.781.en.html>) is

about what you can do for your child when this happens.

Hammers and anvils: This is how the ear works

We can close our eyes, but not our ears. But their job is not only to keep us constantly connected to the outside world. Find out what else the ear can do and how it is designed in this video (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.780.en.html>) .

Obstructive sleep apnea: When breathing frequently stops at night

Nighttime breathing pauses and severe tiredness during the day are one problem. But people who have obstructive sleep apnea have an additional one due to longer recurring breathing pauses at night: their risk of hypertension and other cardiovascular disorders is higher. A detailed fact sheet lets you know what exactly this often misdiagnosed disease is about, and what treatment options are available. To the in-depth version (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.759.en.html>)

At a glance: Important facts about sleep apnea

Unfocused, irritable and overtired – have you felt this way recently? Find out what factors can favor the development of obstructive sleep apnea and when nighttime breathing pauses can become a real health problem. To the short version (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.770.en.html>)

Why expert support is important in CPAP therapy

It is common in treating obstructive sleep apnea: CPAP therapy. It involves wearing a breathing mask overnight. Mildly pressurized air makes sure that the airways are kept free when breathing in. Yet this therapy does take some getting used to, and many end it early. Now trials show that it is worth getting help in order to continue with CPAP therapy. To the research summary (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.771.en.html>)

CPAP breathing therapy: Eight typical problems and how to solve them

First off, what is called CPAP therapy can lessen the effects of obstructive sleep apnea. But many people doing this therapy find the mask uncomfortable and constrictive at first. You can find information about the common problems that nighttime breathing therapy leads to at first and what can then help, [here](http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.772.en.html). To the information (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.772.en.html>)

<http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.101.en.html>)

Living with sleep apnea: Three interviews

“I woke up in the morning and felt well-rested. That was something I hadn’t known for years. I was a completely different person.” Read more here about what has helped this person with sleep apnea and how others cope with the disease in the interviews (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.767.en.html>) .

New quiz: Sleep and sleeping disorders

“How can I get through work tomorrow?” This is what a lot of people think when they simply cannot get any sleep at night. Yet there are quite a few things you can do yourself to get a well-rested start to your day. But what? Take our quiz (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.774.en.html>) to find out.

Combination against repeated stroke: Hope or flop?

They are the classic “blood-thinning” medications: drugs containing acetylsalicylic acid (ASA). The combination drug of ASA and another agent aims at preventing cardiovascular problems after a stroke. Research on the benefits and harms of this combination therapy does not have anything favorable to report, however. To the research summary (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.765.en.html>)

Cataract surgery: A stay in the hospital or a return home after the operation?

Cataract surgery is a routine operation. It may be necessary if someone cannot see details clearly, even with glasses. Because this procedure is done under local anesthetic, people usually can choose to have day surgery. But what does that mean for the operation results? To the updated research summary (URL: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org/index.765.en.html>)

The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG)

The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG) was established by legislation to provide evaluations of the effectiveness, quality and efficiency of healthcare services. This includes the assessment of medicines as well as the publication of health information for consumers and patients.

Evidence basis of our health information

Our information is based primarily on systematic reviews of the effects of health care. Systematic reviews are necessary to gain an objective picture of health care. In order to do this, a clear question is formulated. Researchers then find all the relevant studies that could answer this question. They then evaluate those studies.

You can find a list of the evidence and other scientific literature on which this information is based at **www.informedhealthonline.org**

Disclaimer

This information was prepared and published by the German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG). It is based on the evidence and other scientific literature available at the time of publication. The information is intended for the use of patients in Germany. It is not intended to for use to diagnose illnesses and the information is not intended to substitute for medical advice.