LIFESTYLES

SHARE YOUR STORY

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who have gotten married, graduated, joined the military, etc.

Call the Journal at 285-7411

Treating high blood pressure can be tricky

Fred CICETTI

HEALTH CARE WRITER

Q. If you have high blood pressure, aren't you better off just taking old-fashion water pills instead of all these fancy drugs?

A. Water pills (aka *diuretics*) are the oldest and best studied of the drugs used to treat high blood pressure (aka *hypertension*). Diuretics help the kidneys flush extra water and salt from your body and decrease blood volume to lower pressure.

There are three types of diuretics: thiazide, loop and potassium-sparing. They work in different parts of your kidneys.

In the years since water pills were the drugs of choice for hypertension, the pharmaceutical companies have developed a variety of medicines to keep your pressure in check in ways that are different from the mechanism of diuretics. These include beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, ARBS, calcium channel blockers, vasodilators, alpha blockers, and renin inhibitors.

So, what should you take if you have high blood pressure? Ask your doctor.

Treating high blood pressure can be tricky, because patients react differently to anti-hypertensive drugs. Sometimes, doctors have to find the right combination of *several* drugs to lower blood pressure.

Now we get into the issue of money. Diuretics are cheap. The newer anti-hypertensives are comparatively expensive.

One significant study found that generic diuretic pills that cost pennies a day worked better for patients with high blood pressure than newer drugs that could be as much as 20 times as expensive. Because hypertension affects tens of millions of Americans, this finding had the potential to save the health care system billions of dollars.

But, following the release of the findings, the percentage of patients taking the cheaper diuretics barely increased.

"In the current health care system," Pauline W. Chen, MD, a columnist, wrote in *The New York Times*, "clinicians are rewarded for doing and ordering more. Pharmaceutical and medical device firms reap fortunes from physicians' orders, and a single change could cost them billions. Studies that endorse anything less than another expensive procedure or a newer and more expensive medication or the latest device are often destined for failure or a protracted struggle against drug and device companies that are willing to put up a costly fight."

A large group of medical experts known as the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure recommends that most people try thiazide diuretics as the first choice to treat high blood pressure. If diuretics by themselves don't lower your blood pressure, your doctor may recommend adding newer medications.

The following are some blood-pressure treatment recommendations from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health:

■ If you need to begin drug treatment, you should definitely try a diuretic first.

■ Beta blockers are another option to begin treatment, especially if you're younger than age 60 and do not have diabetes or peripheral artery disease.

■ If you need multiple drugs to control your blood pressure, make one a diuretic.

■ If you have angina (chest pain from heart disease), you may need to take a calcium channel blocker. It should be used along with a diuretic.

Diuretics are generally safe, but do have side effects. The most common side effect is increased urination. For most people, this side effect improves within a few weeks of taking a diuretic.

People who take diuretics may also have too much potassium in their blood if they take a potassium-sparing diuretic, or too little potassium in their blood if they take a thiazide diuretic.

If you would like to ask a question, write to fred@healthygeezer.com.

Cicetti is a health care writer with more than 40 years of journalistic experience.

U of M requesting nominations for 2015 Farm Family of the Year

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION REPORT

The Koochiching County Extension Committee is requesting nominations for the 2015 Koochiching County Farm Family of the Year, sponsored by University of Minnesota Extension.

The Farm Family Recognition Program has existed for over two decades and honors farm families from throughout Minnesota for their contributions to the agriculture industry and their local communities. All of the honored farm families have made significant contributions to Minnesota agriculture and their communities.

The criteria for nominations of an individual or family are:

■ Be a Koochiching County food producer actively involved in agricultural production with one or more agricultural enterprises. Agricultural production areas for consideration include animal, crops, potato, vegetable, fruits, berries, aquaculture, agroforestry, and renewable energy supplies, have made significant short-term progress and/or innovative contributions with their agricultural endeavors or developed an innovative method for a particular environmental problem, adopted a rotational grazing system, added alternative or value-added crops.

■ Have demonstrated a commitment to enhancing and supporting the fields of agriculture and production, have some involvement in their communities and/or related organizations and not have been previously recognized by the Farm Family Program.

To submit a nomination for the Koochiching County Farm Family of the Year, contact Jody Reller at 218-875-2852 or visit the Koochiching County website at http://www3.extension.umn.edu/county/koochiching to complete the nomination form and submit by April 15.

SENIOR MENU

Hot meals for people 60 or older are served at noon Monday through Friday at Koochiching County Senior Center, 307 Fourth St.

Meals are for anyone, regardless of income. A $4 donation is suggested. Meals are subject to change. Participants under age 60 are welcome at $7.50 each.

For reservations call 283-3460 the day before the meal. Cancellations may be made the day of the meal.

MONDAY
Hamburger
Bun
Slice cheese
Potato wedges
Baked beans
Piece fresh fruit

TUESDAY
Egg bake
Square hash brown
Apple juice
Cinnamon roll

WEDNESDAY
Roast pork
Mashed potatoes
Gravy
Three-bean salad
Fruit

THURSDAY
Sweetheart Dinner
Honey glazed meatballs
Mashed potatoes
Mixed vegetables
Decorated Valentine's cake

FRIDAY
Baked ham dinner or alternative
Au Gratin potatoes
Spinach
Fruit

KOOCHICHING SPORTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION
Annual Winter Meeting
Wednesday February 11th, 2015
At the Elks Club
6 p.m. Directors Meeting
7 p.m. General Members Meeting
Followed by Dinner at the Elk's

St. Thomas Catholic Daughter
Valentine Luncheon
Thursday, February 12, 2015
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
St. Thomas Aquinas Hall
415 9th Ave. W.
Menu
Turkey Soufflé, Salads & Desserts
Take-out available.
Adults $7.00 • Ages 5-12 $3.00 • Under 5 FREE
Everyone Welcome!

Timberpins Bowling Lanes
Open Bowling Daily!
KARAOKE NIGHT
Friday and Saturday 9:00 pm
"FRIENDS & FAMILY" Sunday Special
Bar, Food, Arcade, Pool
OPEN 4PM DAILY
NOON ON WEEKENDS!
Phone 218-373-2695
12 Shorewood Drive

LOVE BLOSSOMS
SEND YOUR VALENTINE A VASE OF ENDLESS LOVE FOR 1 YEAR!
On Valentine's Day your Valentine will receive 6 roses vased with a box of 4 truffles and in addition will receive a mixed bouquet delivered to their door for 11 months!
Stop in to see all of our VALENTINE specials today!
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532 4th St.
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P.J. Salvage
The Hideaway
Clothing for Women & Children
Downtown • 326 Third Street • 283-4358

Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club's
30th ANNUAL FAMILY ICE FISHING DERBY & RAFFLE
Saturday, February 28th • 1-4 p.m.
SAND BAY AREA - MAIN ENTRANCE: RAINY LAKE MARINE
Each Child will receive a FREE HOT DOG ticket.
Warm up with the family at some designated fire pits and enjoy FREE s'mores!
LIONS CLUB FOOD WAGON WILL BE SERVING ALL DAY
DERBY PRIZES
Skating rink set up! Weather conditions permitting.
($10 Raffle Ticket Required)
1st - HISUN 700 UTV
2nd - Jiffy Ice Auger
3rd - Humminbird Ice 45 Flasher
Many others to win!
NOTICE: RULES FOR 2015
• 2014 Licenses are VALID.
• No lines in the water until 1:00 p.m.
• Fish Prizes donated by: Hardees; Farmers Insurance - Ronna MacKay; Loons Nest/Rainy Lake One Stop/Rainy Lake Spirits; Sportsman's Service.
• Secret surprise drawings announced throughout the day.
ALL STATE FISHING REGULATIONS ARE ENFORCED
(Remember that you cannot keep walleyes in the Rainy Lake 17"-28" slot nor will they be accepted for the draw!)
$10 RAFFLE TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:
Outdoorsman's Headquarters - Sportsman's Service - Loons Nest - Rainy Lake One Stop - Forestland - Randy's - Mel's Corner Service in Littlefork - Promersbergers Corner in Big Falls - as well as other various locations throughout the borderland.