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Section

Painkillers and high blood in women

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Women taking daily amounts of non-aspirin painkillers—such as extra-strength Tylenol—should monitor their blood pressure, doctors say following a new study suggesting a link between the drugs and hypertension.

"If you're taking these over-the-counter medications at high dosages on a regular basis, make sure that you report it to your doctor and you're checking your blood pressure," said Dr. Christie Ballantyne, a cardiologist at the Methodist DeBakey Heart Center in Houston who had no role in the study.

While many popular over-the-counter painkillers have been linked before to high blood pressure, acetaminophen, sold as Tylenol, has generally been considered relatively free of such risk.

It is the only one that is not a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug or NSAID, a class of medications the federal government just required to carry stricter warning labels because of the risk for heart-related problems. Those include ibuprofen (sold as Advil and Motrin) and naproxen (sold as Aleve). Many had turned to those painkillers in the wake of problems with prescription drugs, such as Vioxx.

However, the new study found that women taking Tylenol were about twice as likely to develop blood pressure problems. Risk also rose for women taking NSAIDS other than aspirin.

The research found that aspirin still remains the safest medicine for pain relief. It has long been known to reduce the risk of cardiovascular problems and was not included in the government's requirement for stricter labels for NSAIDS.

The study involved 5,123 women participating in the Nurses Health Study at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. None had had high blood pressure when it began.

Results were published online Monday in the American Heart Association journal Hypertension.

"It certainly sets the basis for more studies," said Dr. Stephanie Lawhorn, a cardiologist at St. Luke's Mid America Heart Institute in Kansas City. "Most of the time we think that things like acetaminophen are fairly safe drugs."

The study found that women ages 34-77 who took an average daily dose of more than 500 milligrams of acetaminophen — one extra-strength Tylenol — had about double the risk of developing high blood pressure within about three years.

Women 51-77 who take more than 400 mg a day of NSAIDS — equal to say two ibuprofen — had a 78 percent increased risk of developing high blood pressure over those who didn't take the drug. Those ages 34-53 had a 60 percent risk increase.

"We are by no means suggesting that women with chronic pain conditions not receive treatment for their pain," lead author Dr. John Phillip Forman, of Harvard Medical School and associate physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, said in an e-mail. "By pointing out risks associated with these drugs, more informed choices can be made by women and their clinicians."

Previous research linking these drugs to blood pressure problems did not look at dose.

The results in this study held up even when researchers excluded women who were taking pills for headaches, something that could itself be a result

Please see PAINKILLERS/3B



ILLUSTRATION/JIM HUNT

Power of the purse... and shoes

Teen shopaholics find their passion always in fashion

By Gerri Cunningham
THE CHARLOTTE POST

It's a sunny day in August a good 90 plus degrees, not a cloud in the sky and the mall parking lot is quite full, a perfect day for shopping.

SouthPark mall serves as the golden ticket today since it's the first official day of tax-free weekend. Teenage girls carry bags full of goodies and squeeze through crowds in stores for bargains. The halls are sprinkled with men who look as though they're on the verge of a headache, kids yell for their moms to hurry so they can watch TV and the mall employees

couldn't be any happier.

I'm here to talk with teenagers shopaholics to get their story. To illustrate why shopping is such a huge part of their lives and why their boyfriends don't seem to be having as much fun.

Why do men hate shopping malls, and why do most stores target the younger generation with hopes of gaining more profits and more suitably, how do average teenagers feel about this movement?

Watching the chaos in the lobby requires a break. Walking towards an ice cream stand we notice Michelle Goodman, 19,

What makes Goodman stick out is how she sits down showing her male friend all the items she got from Aldo Accessories.

She seems so proud. His face was priceless.

After introductions and small talk Chelle, as she prefers to be called says, "I like to shop so much because it's such a feel good place. I walk in and people greet me, I find everything I want in one place. Im graduating from Waddell (High School) this year and it's crucial I'm on my A game my last year in school."

Chelle pulls out two bags from Aldo Accessories.

"I like to shop so much because it's such a feel good place."
MICHELLE GOODMAN, 19, SENIOR AT WADDELL HIGH SCHOOL

Remembering publisher John H. Johnson

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO —When the Rev. Jesse Jackson was growing up, images of blacks in popular culture consisted mostly of Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben. That was before John H. Johnson began his media empire.

"He put a human face on African people," Jackson recalled Monday. "The media projected us as less intelligent than we were, less hardworking, less patriotic, more volatile, less worthy."

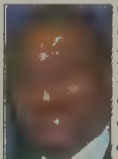
"But John Johnson affirmed us with a clear mirror and clear water. We were not ugly—the water was dirty, and the dirty mirror gave distort-

ed images of who we really were," Jackson said.

Tributes to Johnson, who founded Ebony and Jet magazines, poured out Monday during a packed funeral that drew among others

Jackson, Sen. Barack Obama, Gov. Rod Blagojevich, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and former President Clinton.

Mourners filled the 1,500-seat Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago for the 2 1/2-hour service. Johnson died Aug. 8 of heart failure at 87.



Johnson

Obama said the positive images of blacks that Johnson placed in Ebony and Jet inspired blacks across the country to strive to become doctors, lawyers and politicians.

"Only a handful of men and women leave an imprint on the conscience of a nation and on the history that they helped shape," Obama said. "John Johnson was one of these men."

Born to a poor Arkansas family, Johnson started his publishing business with a \$500 loan secured by his mother's furniture and built a publishing and cosmetics empire that made him one of the wealthiest and most influential black men in

the United States.

Johnson launched Ebony in 1945, at a time when blacks had little political representation and enjoyed scant positive media coverage. The magazine's circulation of 25,000 a year grew to a monthly circulation of more than 1.6 million last year, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation.

Jet magazine, a newsweekly founded in 1951, has a circulation of more than 954,000. Along with Ebony and Jet, Johnson Publishing owns Fashion Fair Cosmetics, a high-end line of cosmetics, and JPC Book

See REMEMBERING/2B

Black leaders to promote health and fitness

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA —Although an avid tennis player and very trim at age 58, Terrell Slayton Jr. has a host of chronic conditions —including diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. But he knows that many other black men in his community don't even know the status of their health.

"Even the most learned among us sometimes, for whatever reason, don't get that checkup as often as we should," said Slayton, who has learned to balance regular exercise and a medication schedule with his busy role as Georgia's assistant sec-

retary of state.

A program created by former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher and a group of the city's top leaders —the 100 Black Men of Atlanta Inc. — is aimed at raising health awareness among black men. They are working to first educate themselves about their own health so they can teach others and serve as role models.

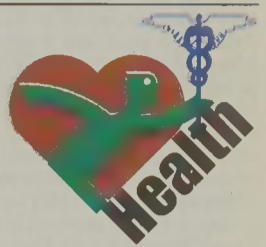
"I started the program ... to take advantage of the fact these men are leaders in the community — they were in a position not only to improve their own health but to influence the health of other people," said Satcher, now interim

president of the Morehouse School of Medicine and member of the 100 Black Men group.

Addressing blacks' health matters long has been a concern of health officials. Blacks die of diabetes at a higher rate than whites in this country. They also suffer higher rates of high blood pressure, infant mortality and tuberculosis.

"We know black men have the lowest life expectancy of any group in the country," said Satcher, a former CDC director. "I noticed here as I've noticed in other parts of the country the rate in which black

Please see BLACK/3B



Early puberty in girls is no obesity risk

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO —Overweight girls reach puberty earlier, but early puberty alone doesn't necessarily lead to being overweight in adulthood, according to a new study.

Instead, it's childhood pudginess that's linked with both early menstruation and adult weight problems.

Girls who were overweight before their first menstrual periods were almost eight times more likely to be overweight as women, the study found. But there was no link between precocious puberty alone and being overweight later in life.

"Given the epidemic of obesity in the population, it's important to know where best to intervene," said lead researcher Aviva Must, associate professor of Public Health and Family Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston.

That intervention should start in childhood, she said.

For parents, she said, the study provides reassurance that early puberty is normal for some overweight girls, and there is no greater risk of being overweight as an adult for a slender girl who gets her first period early.

Findings by other researchers that early puberty in girls causes adult weight problems sparked her research, Must said. That supposed link threatened to rob attention from the real culprit: childhood obesity.

The study will stop doctors from trying to prevent obesity by suppressing early puberty with medications, said Dr. David Katz, director of the Prevention Research Center at Yale University School of Medicine.

"I think this is an important finding," Katz said. "In many ways, it corroborates common sense: Kids who struggle with their weight become adults who struggle with their weight."

The study will be published in the September issue of Pediatrics. It was released Thursday at the American Medical Association's and the National PTA's back-to-school briefing for reporters.

The study defined early puberty as a first period before age 12. During the past 25 years, the average age for a girl's first period hasn't changed much, but it has crept earlier by about 2.5 months, Must said.

The data were from 307 women who had participated 40 years ago in a prior study of their growth and maturation.

As girls, only 4 percent were overweight before their first period. In adulthood, 37 percent of the women were overweight or obese.

Because the prior study looked at public school girls in Newton, Mass., participants were mostly white and middle class, limiting the current findings.

"We need to look at the same thing in African American and Hispanic populations," said Alison Field, assistant professor of pediatrics at Children's Hospital Boston, who does similar research but was not involved in the current study.

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