

January: Cleaning Out the Cabinet

(www.americanmedical-id.com)

What is in your medicine cabinet? If you're like most, there's no telling. Perhaps the last few pills of a prescription you were taking, a couple bottles of pain reliever, bandages scattered at the bottom and some unidentifiable ointment. You may think those extra pills will come in handy some day, but keeping them can actually increase the risk that they may harm you. Taking an expired or wrong medicine can be deathly. Help avoid this risk by taking a few minutes to clean out your medicine cabinet with the following tips.



Why is cleaning out my cabinet important?

Outdated pills and unused prescription drugs in your medicine cabinet can cause injury or death when taken at the wrong dosage or by the wrong person. As reported by the National Trauma Registry Bulletin, almost all cases of poisoning hospitalizations among children under the age of 10, and the cause of 25 percent of admissions for the elderly are because of the misuse of medication at the home. Having these medications in your cabinet could increase the likelihood of an accidental misuse. If you believe the pills left over from your prescription may come in handy one day, don't count on it. Many drugs begin losing their potency after they have reached the expiration date, and others, like tetracycline, become toxic once the expiration date has passed.

What should I get rid of?

First of all, a medicine cabinet in your bathroom is the worst place for you to keep your medicines. The temperature change and humidity created in the bathroom while showering can quickly deteriorate the potency of your medications. These should instead be kept in a cool place away from heat and direct light. A drawer in your dresser or locked box in a closet is good examples of storage places. Remember to keep the cap closed on your bottles and to keep pills or ointments in their original packaging. Check the date on everything in your cabinet and dispose of anything that has passed the expiration



date. If you have doubles of any items, consider whether you really need both or if the extra is just causing clutter. Dispose of anything you have not used in the past 12 months. Dispose of any prescription medications you no longer need. All medicines no longer in their original container, or can no longer be identified should be thrown out. Throw away medicines that have changed color, smell or taste.

How to dispose medicines

In the past we were told to throw out medications in the trash or flush them in the toilet. However, recent studies have detected low concentrations of everything from Aspirin to Zoloft in streams across America. Throwing them away in the trash allows children and animals to get into the possibly lethal medicines. Once the garbage reaches the landfill the pills seep into the ground and contaminate the water. Visit www.disposemy meds.org for safe medication disposal information. Some local drug stores (Walgreens) may sell mailable drug disposal envelopes for \$3.99 each.

What to stock

Now that you have cleaned out your medicine cabinet, make sure you have the essentials for whatever life may throw your way.

- o Thermometer
- o Medicine spoon or oral liquid syringe
- o First aid supplies (bandages and antiseptic)
- o Sunscreen



8 Tips for Making and Keeping Healthy New Year's Resolutions

If you are the type of person who makes but never keeps New Year's resolutions, these suggestions can help you make healthy -- and attainable -- goals this year.

Don't abandon the idea of setting resolutions because you have broken them in the past. You may need to simply readjust the type and number of goals you're setting for yourself.

Do be realistic. A resolution to run a marathon by year's end is likely unrealistic for an inexperienced exerciser. Likewise, resolving to stop all your unhealthy habits at once is likely to fail. Pick a safe, attainable goal with a realistic time frame. For example, if your resolution is to eat



healthier, begin by eliminating one unhealthy food from your diet at a time, not *all* unhealthy foods. **Don't make too many resolutions.** There's no rule that you have to cover all areas you'd like to change in your resolutions. Pick one or two themes -- such as anger management, stress control, healthy eating, smoking cessation, fitness improvement, career advancement -- that are most important to you, and set reachable goals within these areas.

Don't set resolutions whose success is based upon factors beyond your control. Saying "I resolve to have a new job by summer" depends not only upon your own initiative but also upon external factors (the economy, the job market in your field) over which you have no control. Instead tell yourself, "I resolve to have updated my résumé and sent it out to X companies by summer." That way, the success of your resolution is entirely within your control.

Do set resolutions based upon your own wishes, desires, goals, and dreams and not those of society or those persons close to you. While this seems obvious, many people waste time trying to meet society's, or another person's, expectations. A resolution is bound to fail if it isn't from your heart.

Do plan intermediate goals if it helps you maintain control. Decide where you'd like to be in three or six months, and check yourself then. Achieving these smaller goals also gives you a sense of accomplishment and motivation for the bigger projects.

Do use the buddy system. Rely on your friends to support you in your resolutions, and do the same for your friends. Social support can be a great strengthener of motivation.

Do plan a reward for yourself when the resolutions, or intermediate goals, are met.

REFERENCE:

Stöppler, Melissa Conrad. "Stress Management." MedicineNet.com. Aug. 24, 2011. <http://www.medicinenet.com/stress_management_techniques/>

Health Ministry Contact Information

“Fruit” of the Month: Nuts

(www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)

While nuts are not a fruit or vegetable, nuts like fruits and vegetables are important to an overall healthy diet. Tree nuts are often good sources of protein and fiber and are high in healthy fats. They also contain several vitamins and minerals. Peanuts are often included with nuts, though they are really a legume. Like all plants, nuts and legumes contain no cholesterol.



How to Select Nuts in the Shell

Nuts should be heavy for their size. They should not rattle when shaken: this is a sign that they have dried out and are aging. There should be no evidence of damage from insects or moisture. The shells should not be cracked or have holes. If nuts are purchased in bulk, be sure the bins are covered.

How to Select Shelled Nuts

Check the expiration date on packaged nuts. Packaged nuts should not appear rubbery or shriveled. When purchasing shelled nuts from the bulk section, check to see that the bins are covered. If it is possible, smell the nuts to be sure that are not rancid.

Nuts and Your Heart: Eating Nuts for Heart Health

People who eat nuts as part of a heart-healthy diet can lower the LDL, low-density lipoprotein or "bad," cholesterol level in their blood. High LDL is one of the primary causes of heart disease. Nuts contain a lot of fat; as much as 80 percent of a nut is fat. Even though most of this fat is healthy fat, it's still a lot of calories. That's why you should eat nuts in moderation. Ideally, you should use nuts as a substitute for saturated fats, such as those found in meats, eggs and dairy products. Instead of eating unhealthy saturated fats, try substituting a handful of nuts. According to the Food and Drug Administration, eating about a handful (1.5 ounces, or 42.5 grams) a day of most nuts, such as almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, some pine nuts, pistachio nuts and walnuts, may reduce your risk of heart disease. But again, do this as part of a heart-healthy diet. Just eating nuts and not cutting back on saturated fats found in many dairy and meat products won't do your heart any good.

Recipe

Almond-Honey Power Bar

Serves 8

(www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)

Ingredients

1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
1/4 cup slivered almonds
1/4 cup sunflower seeds
1 tablespoon flaxseeds, preferably golden
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
1 cup unsweetened whole-grain puffed cereal (Kashi's 7 Whole Grain Puffs).
1/3 cup currants
1/3 cup chopped dried apricots
1/3 cup chopped golden raisins
1/4 cup creamy almond butter
1/4 cup turbinado sugar
1/4 cup honey
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/8 teaspoon salt

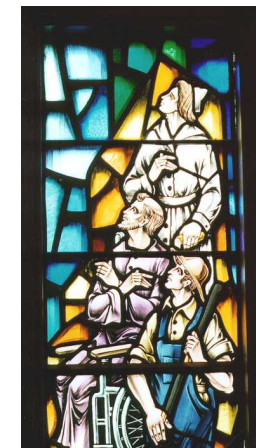


Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat an 8-inch-square pan with cooking spray. Spread oats, almonds, sunflower seeds, flaxseeds and sesame seeds on a large, rimmed baking sheet. Bake until the oats are lightly toasted and the nuts are fragrant, shaking the pan halfway through, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl. Add cereal, currants, apricots and raisins; toss to combine. Combine almond butter, sugar, honey, vanilla and salt in a small saucepan. Heat over medium-low, stirring frequently, until the mixture bubbles lightly, 2 to 5 minutes. Immediately pour the almond butter mixture over the dry ingredients and mix with a spoon or spatula until no dry spots remain. Transfer to the prepared pan. Lightly coat your hands with cooking spray and press the mixture down firmly to make an even layer (wait until the mixture cools slightly if necessary). Refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes; cut into 8 bars.

Nutritional Information

Per serving: 244 calories; 10 g fat (1 g sat , 5 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 38 g carbohydrates; 15 g added sugars; 5 g protein; 3 g fiber; 74 mg sodium; 313 mg potassium.



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