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ASK A HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE SPECIALIST

Jan 10, 2006

Sodium in medications: A concern if you have high blood pressure

Q. I'm on a sodium-restricted diet and really watch what I eat. Is it true that medications can contain large amounts of sodium?
No name / No state

A. Although a salt shaker is the most obvious source of added sodium in foods, most of the sodium you ingest is hidden. It's hidden in the preparation and preservation of most processed foods. Another potential source of sodium is medications. Some drugs contain large amounts of sodium, including certain antacids, laxatives and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). If you use these medications frequently, check the label or ask your pharmacist about their sodium content. You may also ask if reduced-sodium versions of these drugs are available.

Drug manufacturers are required to list sodium content on the label of prescription drugs. In April 2004, the Food and Drug Administration issued new rules requiring content labeling and warning labeling for over-the-counter drugs that contain levels of sodium that may be harmful to people with certain underlying medical conditions.

The new rules require warnings on labels to alert people who are on sodium-restricted diets to consult their doctors before using products that contain more than 140 milligrams (mg) of sodium as the maximum daily dose.

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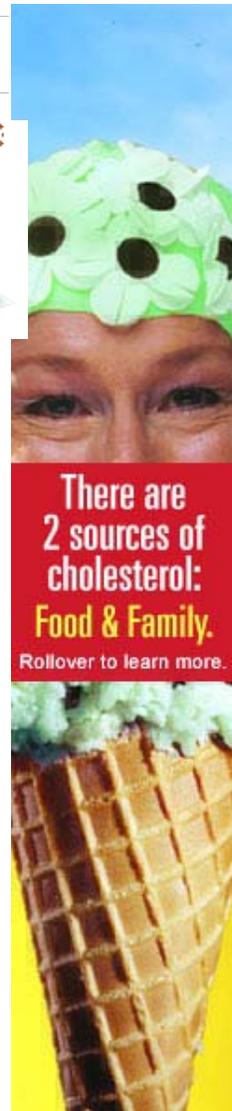
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