

by Scott LaFee

MEDTRONICA

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The Web and the world are awash in water scams, from the claimed elixirlike properties of oxygenated water (all water is oxygenated) to magnetic laundry balls that produce only clean magnets. [Learn more here.](#)

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The left side of your brain is responsible for your choice of words, the right side for your tone of voice.

GET ME THAT. STAT!

Further proof that it's tougher to be a mom. Danish researchers have found that first-time mothers - but not first-time fathers - face an increased risk of mental disorders, from schizophrenia and bipolar disorder to depression. The risk is greatest in the first three months following childbirth.

OLD MEMORIES - The gene variation that helps some people reach 90 years of age and more also appears to protect their memories and ability to think and learn new information. CNS Photo.
MEDTRONICA - The Web and the world are awash in water scams, from the claimed elixerlike properties of oxygenated water (all water is oxygenated) to magnetic laundry balls that produce only clean magnets. Learn more online at www.chem1.com/CQ/. CNS Photo.
HYPOCHONDRIAC'S GUIDE

About one-third of heart-related deaths cannot be explained by known risk factors. Looking for answers, some Israel researchers looked skyward and found another possibility: sunspots.

Researchers from the Rabin Medical Center examined death rates of Lithuanians over a 10-year period. They claimed to have found a correlation: Heart fatalities increased when solar radiation fluctuations altered the Earth's geomagnetic field.

Scientifically, a correlation isn't a cause, but it may be one more reason to stay out of the sun.

OLD MEMORIES

If you belong to one of those families where members seem to live a very, very long time, here's more good news. The gene variation that helps some people reach 90 years of age and more also appears to protect their memories and ability to think and learn new information.

The gene variant, according to researchers at the Institute for Aging Research at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, N.Y., alters the cholesterol particles in the blood, making them bigger than normal. Smaller particles are more dangerous because they more easily lodge themselves in the linings of blood vessels, creating fatty obstructions that cause heart attacks and strokes.

Einstein College researchers examined 159 people of Ashkenazi or Eastern European/Jewish descent, all of whom were 95 years old or older. Those with the identified gene variant were twice as likely to have good brain function compared with those who did not have the variant. The researchers found a similar effect among 124 Ashkenazi Jews between the ages of 75 and 85.

The findings are among the first to identify reasons for longevity among the very old and why they don't develop diseases. "In studying these centenarians," institute director Nir Barzilai said, "we hope to learn what factors lessen their risk for diseases that affect the general population at a much younger age."

That's good news for the rest of us, because only one in 10,000 people lives to be 100.

STORIES FOR THE WAITING ROOM

Some tribes in ancient Peru ground the bones of deceased relatives and mixed them with liquor. The thinking was that consuming the remains of a loved one was a far better fate than burying them in a hole in the ground.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK

Vitricophobia - fear of stepfathers

BEST MEDICINE

The more scientists learn about the human brain, the more mystifying it becomes. Example: The brain is divided into two halves: left and right. In the left, nothing is right; in the right, nothing is left.

OBSERVATION

"I am not a vegetarian because I love animals; I'm a vegetarian because I hate plants."

- A.W. Brown

LAST WORDS

"Goodbye. Why am I hemorrhaging?"

- Russian poet and writer Boris Pasternak ("Doctor Zhivago") 1890-1960

WellNews: All the news that's fit by Scott LaFee