

by Scott LaFee

MEDTRONICA - The National Osteoporosis Foundation Web site at www.nof.org is a good place to begin learning about the bone-loss disease that afflicts millions of elderly people, particularly women. CNS Photo.

MEDTRONICANational Osteoporosis Foundationwww.nof.orgA good place to begin learning about osteoporosis, a bone-loss disease that afflicts millions of elderly people, particularly women. The information on symptoms, treatment and prevention is reliable, current and easy to read. Plus, there are links to finding doctors and support groups.

DRIVE-BY SCIENCEHere's some motoring health news that you probably already knew (assuming you're conscious), and some news that you've probably long suspected.

A French study of more than 13,000 middle-age drivers found that, according to the drivers themselves, 36 percent drove their cars "a few times a year" while feeling sleepy. Slightly less than 1 percent drove while slumberous once a month on average; 0.3 percent, once a week; and 0.2 percent, more than once a week.

The researchers then compared this information with the risk of serious traffic accidents and found that drivers who drove while sleepy a few times a year were 1.5 times more likely to be involved in a serious mishap. For those who regularly drove in a torpid state, the figure was almost three times.

The researchers' conclusion: Don't drive while drowsy.

DRIVE-BY SCIENCE - A French study of more than 13,000 middle-age drivers found that, according to the drivers themselves, 36 percent drove their cars 'a few times a year' while feeling sleepy. CNS Photo. Meanwhile, across the channel in England, a study in the British Medical Journal found that observed drivers of four-wheel-drive vehicles were more likely to flout laws regarding cell phone and seat belt use. (In England, it's against the law to use a cell phone while driving.)

Researchers found that operators of four-wheel-drive vehicles were four times more likely to use cell phones while driving and more likely to forgo wearing seat belts. They speculated that such drivers mistakenly believe they are safer in such vehicles and thus freer to engage in risky behavior.

Such as, perhaps, driving on the left side of the road?

BODY OF KNOWLEDGEThe average human produces 10,000 gallons of saliva in a lifetime.

GET ME THAT. STAT!The British Journal of Sports Medicine tested 973 pedometers (those little devices worn on the hip to count steps taken or miles walked). The journal found that roughly three-fourths of the pedometers were inaccurate by at least 10 percent, suggesting they were practically worthless as accurate exercise monitors.

The problem was worst among the cheapest devices.

DOC TALKChandelier's sign - the result of any medical test or probing after which the patient must be removed from the chandelier, figuratively speaking.

BEST MEDICINEPatient: Doc, I've got this terrible problem. I think I'm a dog. I walk around on all fours, bark in the middle of the night and crave Kibbles 'n Bits.Psychiatrist: This is very interesting. Please lie down on the couch.Patient: I'm not allowed on the couch.

STORIES FOR THE WAITING ROOMLess than a century ago, some physicians still believed that mental illness was caused by infected body parts. Among them was an American psychiatrist named Henry Cotton. In the early part of the 20th century, while medical director at Trenton State Hospital in New Jersey, Cotton ordered the pulling of more than 11,000 teeth, and the removal of stomachs, gallbladders, colons, testicles and ovaries - all considered prime infection spots for insanity.

Cotton, who retired in 1930, reportedly suffered a mental breakdown and treated himself. After pulling several of his own teeth, he declared himself cured. He died in 1933.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK Trichopathophobia - fear of hair

LAST WORDS On his deathbed, the famous French writer and philosopher Voltaire (Francois-Marie Arouet, 1694-1778) was asked to renounce the devil. His response: "This is no time to be making new enemies."

Well News - All the news that's fit by Scott LaFee