

# Health

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## MEDICAL NEWS SLEEP APNEA

# BREATHING DEEP



## New, minimally invasive procedure can address snoring and its underlying causes

By Susan Bloom :: For NJ Press Media

Jim Ciccone's visit to the doctor occurred innocently enough, after his wife complained about his snoring.

"One morning, Caroline came downstairs and seemed really irritable and out-of-sorts," Ciccone said. "I asked her what was wrong, and she said she'd gotten a terrible night's sleep because of my snoring and couldn't take it anymore! I didn't want her to be miserable, so I realized I had to do something ...."

The incident led the 50 year-old Manahawkin resident, a driver for the Stafford Township Dial-A-Ride bus system, on an eye-opening journey. After a procedure to fix his long-standing deviated septum failed to address his snoring issues, Ciccone consulted an ear, nose, and throat specialist and agreed to participate in a sleep study, which held some startling revelations in store.

"I learned that I had stopped breathing between 22 and 46 times an hour while I slept because my tongue was falling back into my throat and obstructing my airway," Ciccone said. "This was causing my snoring issues, but more importantly, I learned that it was potentially setting the stage for development of heart disease or another serious condition if I didn't have it addressed."

"Sleep apnea – which is characterized by abnormal pauses in breathing or instances of abnormally low breathing during sleep – is the most prevalent of the sleep disorders that affect as many as 70 million Americans," said Dr. Edward Engle, a surgical specialist in otolaryngology who practices at the NJ

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## STUDY RESULTS: SUPPLEMENTS DON'T SUFFICE

# Smokers mistakenly believe vitamins protect them from cancer

By Mary Elizabeth Dallas :: Healthday

Smokers who take a multivitamin pill may think they can smoke more because the supplement protects them from the harmful affects of cigarettes, according to a new study.

Researchers found that some people who smoke, mistakenly



believe the vitamins will reduce their risk of cancer, allowing them to light up more often. The study noted that such trading of a virtuous behavior for a subsequent indulgence, known as the "licensing effect," could undermine smokers' urge to kick the addiction.

"Smokers who take dietary supplements can fool themselves into thinking they are protected against cancer and other diseases. Reminding health-conscious smokers that multivitamins don't prevent cancer may help them control their smoking or even encourage them to stop," said the study's lead author, Wen-Bin Chiou in a journal news release.

The study, published online Aug. 2 in the journal *Addiction*, involved two experiments. In the first experiment, a group of 74 daily smokers were given a placebo (dummy) pill, but half were told they were taking a vitamin C pill. After taking the pills, the smokers were allowed to smoke freely as they took

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## People's Pharmacy

By Joe Graedon  
& Teresa Graedon

## Painkiller warning presents dilemma

**Q.** A couple of weeks ago, I read that popular painkillers can cause irregular heart rhythms. I stopped taking Aleve for pain because I do experience A-fib and atrial flutters. Since going off Aleve, this heart problem has dropped to almost nothing.

The trouble is that I switched to aspirin instead. Now I am having big-time bruising with the slightest bump. That convinced me to stop the aspirin.

I am going to try Tylenol, but I hope my liver enzymes don't act up. They have been elevated in the past. Is there anything else I can do except stop everything and endure joint pain?

**A.** You have reason to be cautious with pain relievers. A recent online article in the British journal *BMJ* (July 4, 2011) suggests that anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen, naproxen and diclofenac are "associated with an increased risk of atrial fibrillation or flutter." Such heart-rhythm abnormalities can trigger blood clots that may lead to strokes.

Although aspirin does not appear to trigger arrhythmias, it can thin the blood enough to cause easy bruising. If acetaminophen (Tylenol) raised your liver enzymes in the past, there is a potential risk if you start taking it daily.

You may wish to try a home remedy to ease your joint pain. You will find details about dozens of options in our new book from National Geographic ("The People's Pharmacy Quick and Handy Home Remedies"), online at PeoplesPharmacy.com. Fish oil, turmeric, tart cherries, pineapple or pomegranate juice, gin-soaked golden raisins, plant pectin and purple grape juice as well as herbs like ginger and boswellia may ease your discomfort.

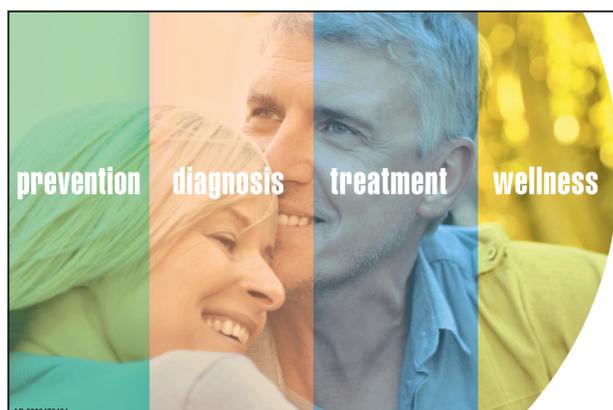
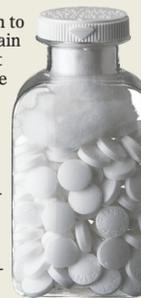
**Q.** I read a question in your column about smelly gas, and I have a suggestion: Take a Pepto-Bismol tablet. It helps control that odorous gas.

Pepto-Bismol will turn your stool black, but there's no harm in occasional use. I take the tablets with me on trips to prevent traveler's diarrhea.

**A.** Pepto-Bismol (bismuth subsalicylate) has been shown to control the odor in flatus. It reduces hydrogen sulfide (the smelly stuff) from the colon quite dramatically (*Gastroenterology*, May 1998).

Regular use of Pepto-Bismol could be problematic, though. Excessive bismuth can be toxic, leading to symptoms such as nausea, rash, diarrhea, stomach pain, mouth ulcers and kidney damage. Too much salicylate can interact with other medications such as warfarin (Coumadin).

In their column, Joe and Teresa Graedon answer letters from readers. Email them via their Web site: [www.PeoplesPharmacy.com](http://www.PeoplesPharmacy.com). Their newest book is "The People's Pharmacy Quick and Handy Home Remedies."



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