

## CLINICAL TIP

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**Aricept (generic name donepezil) is a common medication used to help treat dementia in Alzheimer's patients.** It works by increasing the amount of acetylcholine in the brain, a chemical found to be deficient in patients with Alzheimer's. This medication does not work for every patient; about only one in twelve patients may see an improvement in symptoms. Benefits to look for may include an increase in memory, interaction with others, speech, and self-care. Some side effects that you may notice are nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, and complaints of abnormal dreams (for GI symptoms giving the medication with food may help). This medication may decrease the heart rate which can lead to fainting and may put the patient at an increased risk for falls. When monitoring for beneficial effects, keep in mind that this medication is not a cure, but may help keep symptoms from worsening. This medication has recently become available as the generic donepezil, so please alert your staff for the change in medication name as patients are switched from brand to generic.

References: LexiComp, *The Pharmacist's Letter*

## WALK FOR HAPPINESS!

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"Our founding fathers, in their wisdom, knew there was no way to guarantee happiness but instead happiness is a possibility for those who knew how it could be pursued. We know that it is best pursued through these other channels, allowing happiness to find and reward us." (Quote from Dr. Ann Thomas) I recently started an exercise training program for John, an 81-year-old man. He had never worked out much before and had never set foot in a gym. He told me he needed to exercise to improve his golf swing. He also said he had been an avid walker most of his life. This gentleman had a sparkle in his eye and a large smile on his face for most of our conversation. He also looked as if he were about 60. He told me that when he finishes walking he feels better about himself. In essence he feels happier. Is this "feeling happier" in John's head or **does walking really make people feel happier?**

**The answer to this question is YES!** Walking does make people happier. In fact, moving your body is highly associated to your happiness. When you walk (or engage in physical activity) your brain emits chemicals that give you a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Many avid walkers will tell you that going for a walk helps to clear the mind and gain a more positive outlook on life. Research on walking shows that walking over 30 minutes per day can also increase your mental sharpness.

**Walk for health and happiness.** Grab a friend and make it a social event! The more you move your body the healthier and happier you will be! May your New Year be filled with many steps and lots of smiles!

## FROM THE DIETITIAN:

**“WARNING!”: This is something that you may see on your medication and no doubt, take a moment to read the information.**

In the recent past, there has been more research on food and medication interactions. One common misconception with food and medication is the link between Vitamin K containing foods and warfarin/Coumadin. If someone taking warfarin/Coumadin consumes a large amount of foods rich in Vitamin K, a known blood-clotting factor, the blood-thinning effect can be cancelled out and the results can be ultimately life threatening.

**HOWEVER:** this does not mean that you have to avoid these nutrient rich foods, like dark green vegetables. The key is to be consistent with Vitamin K foods on a weekly basis, so your medical team can adjust your medications accordingly. For example, if you love salads and broccoli, try to consume a consistent amount, such as 1 cup per day.

Another known food/medication interaction happens when you consume grapefruit juice while on certain medications. This warning will be clearly labeled on your medications. This interaction occurs when the powerful compounds in grapefruit juice interfere with the enzymes in the liver responsible for metabolizing about 50% of drugs currently prescribed.



Your nutrition goal should be to consume a wide variety of healthy foods, which is very possible on most medications! Simply take your medications as prescribed and listen to warning labels.

**If you have questions about other food/medication interactions,** please contact a pharmacist at MedSave or me, Kristin Klinefelter, RD.