What are You Drinking With Your Medicine?

If you’re like most of us, you probably take your medications, both prescribed and over the counter (OTC), without thinking too much about what you’re drinking with them. Water is the best choice, but it isn’t the only choice, and we often reach for whatever is handy (or tastier) at the time.

Certain classes of medicines do not work well together, but some foods and beverages should also be avoided.

Grapefruit juice impacts the effectiveness of more than fifty different kinds of medications by interfering with enzymes that break down these medications in the intestines. This can cause too much of the drug to remain in your blood. This increases the risk of side effects. The effects of this citrus last more than 24 hours, so simply changing when you take the drugs doesn’t matter. Avoiding grapefruit and its juice is the only way not to be affected.

Pomegranate juice contains an enzyme that can break down several blood pressure medicines. It also behaves in a manner similar to grapefruit juice by blocking enzymes in the intestines.

If you take medication for thyroid problems, avoid ingesting dairy products within 4 hours of taking the meds.

Many of us perk ourselves up and get the day started with a cup of coffee or other caffeinated beverage. If you take appetite suppressants containing ephedrine, asthma drugs, or an amphetamine such as Adderall, you should forgo any drink or other products containing caffeine.

Sports drinks have become a trendy alternative to plain water over the years, and many people drink them even though they don’t participate in high level activities. In addition to pretty colors and exotic flavors, sports drinks also contain potassium. You should avoid these drinks and other foods such as bananas if you are taking certain drugs for heart failure or high blood pressure. You should also avoid added potassium if you have kidney disease.

The website Drugs.com lists 365 major drug interactions with potassium, 10 moderate drug interactions, and 18 minor interactions.

Avoid wine and energy drinks if you take any type of antidepressant. This combination can lead to high blood pressure, headaches, fast heart rate, and stroke.

Green tea with Vitamin K can decrease the effect of blood thinners such as coumarin and warfarin.

Always tell your primary care physician or specialist about any medications you are taking, including OTC and homeopathic products. It may be necessary to substitute one medication for another, or you may need to stop taking a particular medication prior to an invasive procedure such as surgery. Ask your doctor or pharmacist how a medicine should be taken: with food, on an empty stomach, at night, etc.

Keep a medicine list with dosages and time when taken on the refrigerator in case someone other than you needs to report it. Such lists can also be kept online or on your smart phone.

Pomegranates are rich in antioxidants. Sometimes the health risks outweigh the benefits.
Helping Bullies and Their Victims

“A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students” (Olweus, 1993, p. 318). Bullying has become high profile in recent years in the U. S. as more and more victims of this abuse have committed suicide as a way to escape the torment.

Understanding the dynamic between the bully and his or her target can aid in the development of successful intervention strategies. Bullying is one of the most prevalent types of school violence, and four distinct roles have been identified: bully, victim, bully/victim, and bystander. A bully may target a victim by saying unpleasant or threatening things, by causing physical harm as in hitting or shoving, by isolating the victim, or by using social media to ridicule the victim and turn others against him or her.

There is a strong link between a bully’s personality traits and interactions within early social contexts. Bullies tend to be different from bully/victims in that they are very deliberate in targeting their victims. Far from suffering from low self-esteem, bullies often feel superior to their victims and lack any empathy for the pain and suffering they cause. They may also feel a sense of entitlement.

Longitudinal studies have shown that bullying behavior tends to be stable over time. This means that children who bully others at a young age tend to still engage in this behavior in adolescence or adulthood.

With respect to gender, boys are more often victims of physical bullying while girls are more likely to experience social and relational bullying. On average, Black middle-school age students are more likely to be classified as bullies and as bully-victims than are White students. Reports show that Hispanic students experience a bit more bullying than Black or White youth.

As a general rule, those who bully others lack empathy for their victims and do not recognize the pain and suffering their actions cause. Programs designed to help bullies relate to their victims as people and not as objects can help them change their attitudes and behaviors. Often, bullies have a positive attitude about what they are doing, either because it allows them to get their way, because it feeds their self-perceptions, or because it aligns them more closely with important people in their lives. In other words, they might imagine themselves to be the tough kid in class or have a parent who expects aggression as a way of demonstrating manhood. Other times, there may be little emotional nurturing of the bully by the parents, so the bully compensates by becoming aggressive.

Positive school and work environments are more highly correlated with non-aggressive, non-bullying behaviors. When teachers and administrators look the other way because “kids will be kids” or the victims just need to “toughen up,” the message that everyone internalizes is that it’s each person for himself or herself and these behaviors are okay.

Regardless of environment, it is important that everyone be on the same page:

- Collaboratively with students or employees, develop a definition of bullying.
- Provide training and activities that show how these behaviors are hurtful and destructive.
- Work together to identify positive ways to interact and communicate.
- Teach empathy skills, social skills, and anger management skills.
- Help victims find their strengths and their voices.

Sticks and stones might break bones, but words can destroy a person from the inside out.

“Sticks and stones might break bones, but words can destroy a person from the inside out.”

Health Matters
**Tips for Surviving the Holidays**

A holiday ought to be a joyous occasion when we get to spend time with family and friends and take a break from work. Many people, however, dread the holidays for a variety of reasons. If you’re one of them, here are some tips and strategies to help you stay sane and happy during this busy time of year.

- **Discover the power of “No.”** We may feel overwhelmed because we and those we love expect so much from us. Plan in advance what you can comfortably do (and what you would like to do) and politely decline other invitations. Nobody really wants to be around anyone who seems to have martyred himself or herself for the event.

- **Keep your perspective.** So, your brother’s wife is a lazy gold-digger and your sister’s third husband is a jerk. Uncle Joe drinks too much. Aunt Martha is always opinionated. Families are what they are, but holidays happen a few times a year. You don’t have to agree or love them wildly to be civil. And who knows? Maybe if you spend more time being happy and charming, they will begin to seem less problematic to you.

- **Drop perfect from your vocabulary.** Perfect only happens when you dream, on greeting card commercials, and in Disney movies. Life is uniquely and delightfully imperfect and messy. Run with it.

- **Get enough sleep.** Sure, it’s the holiday season and there are parties and meals and shopping, and, and, the list goes on. That’s all the more reason why you need your sleep. If you don’t get enough, you’ll be cranky and minor things will seem impossibly big to you.

- **Be sure to eat well and on schedule.** One reason we tend to overdo during the holidays is that we try to “save space” so we can enjoy nibbling all the goodies at parties or have a second piece of pie. If you aren’t starving when you sit down to eat or when you get to the event, you can relax, slow down, and truly enjoy the experience.

- **Make time for yourself.** Remember that this is your holiday, too, so some time should be devoted to your own revitalization and needs.

- **Get in some physical activity every day.** This may not be the time to set huge exercise and weight-loss goals for yourself, but you can still be moderate in what you do. Enlist a friend or relative to walk with you or engage in other activities.

- **Drink plenty of water.** We tend to overdo it with caffeine and alcohol during this time of year, but we must remember to drink plenty of water, too.

- **If your stress stems from not having family and friends around, look for opportunities to enjoy the season with others who find themselves alone.** Get yourself out of the house and volunteer at a community center. Find neighbors or classmates who might enjoy having company. If you’re not feeling social, this can be a good time to catch up on those books you’ve been wanting to read or to try that new recipe you found a while ago.

- **If the season seriously depresses you and makes you feel bad,** do not hesitate to reach out for help. You can find resources at [http://www.occc.edu/support/Community.html](http://www.occc.edu/support/Community.html).

A smile can lift your mood and help you keep the holiday hustle and bustle in perspective.
**OCCC NOW IS POWER**

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**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Student Support Services houses a variety of services designed to enhance the performance and well-being of students at Oklahoma City Community College.

- Services to Students with Disabilities, including providing accommodations for documented disabilities, interpreting and captioning services for deaf and hard of hearing students, and assistive technology.
- Professional counseling by licensed providers.
- Learning support specialists to assist with academic needs such as learning styles, study skills, test-taking, and general health and wellness issues.
- TRIO Grant Programs (Upward Bound and Trio Student Support Services) designed to help first generation college students learn more about college before they arrive and how to be more successful once they are here.

For more information about our services and how to access them, please visit our website at http://www.occc.edu/support/ or call us at 682-7520. We are located on the first floor of the Main Building near SEM Entry 3.

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**Beef and Red Pepper Stir-Fry**

1/3 cup oyster sauce
1/4 cup water
2 tablespoons Shao Hsing rice wine or dry sherry
1 tablespoon reduced sodium soy sauce
1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons finely chopped scallions, divided
2 large cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
3 teaspoons peanut oil or canola oil, divided
12 ounces sirloin tip, cut into 1/8 by 3 inch strips
2 medium red bell peppers, cut into 1 inch pieces
12 ounces bok choy, stems and leaves separated, cut into 1 inch pieces
1 8 ounce can baby corn, rinsed

Combine oyster sauce, water, rice wine or sherry, and soy sauce in a small bowl; set aside.

Combine 1/3 cup scallions, garlic, ginger, and crushed red pepper in another small bowl.

Heat a 14 inch flat-bottomed wok over high heat until a bead of water vaporizes within 1 to 2 seconds of contact. Swirl in 1 teaspoon of oil. Add 1 tablespoon of the scallion mixture and sirloin; stir-fry until only a trace of pink remains in the meat, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

Heat the remaining 2 teaspoons oil in the wok and add the remaining scallion mixture. Stir-fry until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add bell pepper and bok choy stems and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add bok choy greens and stir-fry until the vegetables begin to wilt, about 1 minute more.

Add corn and the reserved oyster sauce mixture and stir until the sauce simmers, about 2 minutes. Add the reserved sirloin and toss until heated through, about 30 seconds. Serve immediately sprinkled with the remaining 2 tablespoons scallions.

226 calories
8 grams fat
45 milligrams cholesterol
18 grams carbohydrates
21 grams protein
3 grams fiber
852 milligrams sodium

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This meal is fast, easy, and tasty. The veggies make it very healthful as well.