

Antibiotics and antihistamines: things you should know

In this article, I want to give you some facts you may not be aware of about penicillin, tetracycline and antihistamines.

Penicillin is an antibiotic used to treat bacterial infections such as venereal disease and pneumonia. It is not effective against viral infections. And since most common colds are virus infections, it is not effective against them. Penicillin must be prescribed by a doctor so that the kind and strength of the medication fits the infection it is to fight. Do not take old prescriptions on your own. Prescription instructions must be followed

precisely.

Skipping several pills or not taking the whole series of pills may well endanger the whole treatment. Penicillin is usually taken before meals or on an empty stomach. Do not take penicillin with orange juice. Orange juice inhibits the effectiveness of the drug. Take the medication with water.

Some people have an allergic reaction to penicillin and this reaction can be very severe. If you have an allergy to penicillin, be sure your doctor is aware of it. Penicillin is also used with caution by people who suffer from

asthma, hay fever and allergies. Some side effects of penicillin appear with prolonged use. Skin rashes, inflamed tongue and body swelling are common.

Tetracycline is an antibiotic used in the treatment of bacterial infections. Once again, tetracycline must be taken just as prescribed to be effective. This drug must be taken on an empty stomach and is not to be taken with dairy products, as they reduce its effectiveness.

Outdated tetracycline is dangerous and can cause kidney damage. Do not use old or outdated prescriptions. Infants and pregnant women should not be on prolonged tetracycline treatments, as the drug may interfere with normal tooth and bone development in the child. Tetracycline tends to bind the body's calcium supply.

Some people have an allergic reaction to the drug. Possible side-effects are nausea, diarrhea, flatulence, skin rashes and swelling. Prolonged use of the drug can lead to infections such as vaginitis and intestinal infections

because the drug kills off the body's helpful bacteria as well as its harmful bacteria. Tetracycline may lead to jaundice in pregnant women.

Antihistamines are used in the treatment of allergy reactions, colds, car sickness and sometimes as a sedative because they cause drowsiness. Antihistamines do not fight or cure the allergy or cold. They merely alleviate the symptoms by interfering with the neural connections of the nervous system that makes one aware of the symptom.

There are a variety of possible reactions to antihistamines from strong allergic reactions, nausea, headaches, loss of appetite, excessive urination and double vision in addition to the more common and less serious side-effects of drowsiness, dizziness, dry mouth and irritability. Do not combine the use of antihistamines

with alcohol, sedatives, cannabis, hypnotics or psychotherapeutics.

Do not use machinery or drive until your reaction to the drug is known. It may make you too drowsy to use the machinery safely. Some preparations such as Sinutab contain codeine. Do not use these during pregnancy as they may harm the unborn child. Antihistamines are not recommended as a treatment for asthma as they tend to dry up secretion and thus further thicken the mucus that fills the lungs in asthma.

These facts cover only three kinds of common prescription drugs that you are likely to use. When using any drug be sure to ask your doctor and druggist for specific instructions on when and how to take the medication, and follow instructions exactly.

Do not take someone else's old prescriptions.

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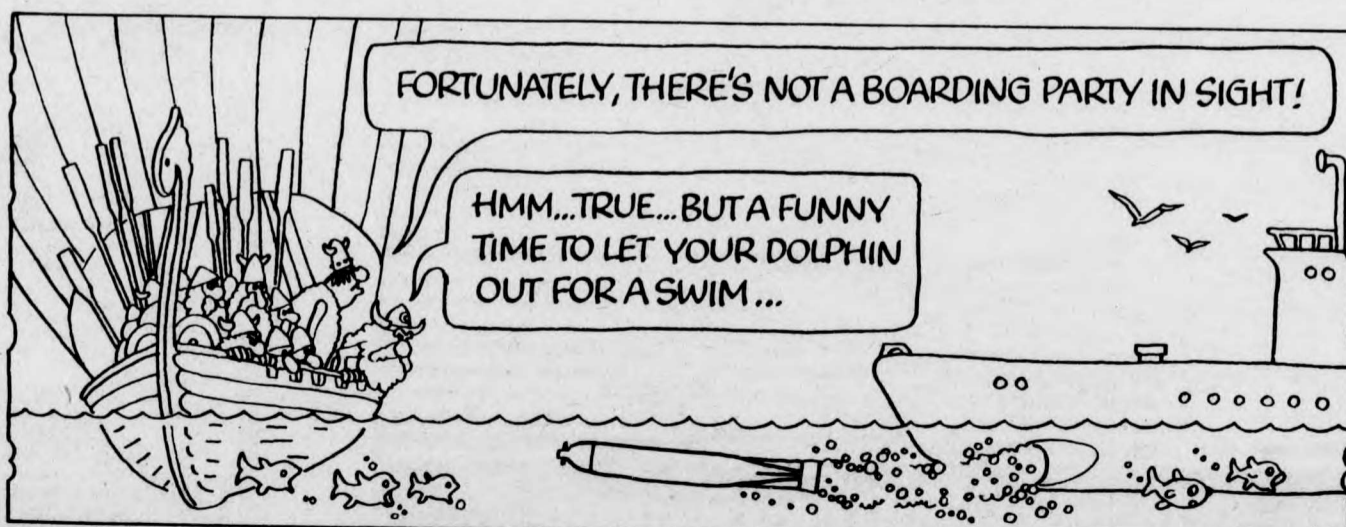
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