Mid Alert®

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4 JULY 1, 2008

This newsletter is issued every 2 months & distributed free of charge

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Selected Medical News

New Hope For COPD Patients In Mucolytic Carbocisteine

The worsening of symptoms in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) can be curtailed by using carbocisteine, according to an article released on Jun 16, 2008 in *The Lancet*.Carbocisteine is a mucolytic drug, which breaks down mucus in the body so that it can be more easily cleared from the body. Since one of COPD's symptoms involves the oversecretion of mucus, mucolytics have great potential for treatment of this disease. Additional characteristics of COPD include airflow limitation, oxidative stress, and airway inflammation.

USC Study Shows Belly Fat May Affect Liver Function

A study by the University of Southern California (USC) suggests the release of lipids from abdominal fat, which drains directly to the liver,which is a key center of glucose and insulin metabolism, where they may accumulate as triglyceride and cause dysregulation of these important metabolic processes, which may be a primary mechanism leading to insulin resistance, a strong risk factor for type 2 diabetes.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids Linked To Prevention Of Macular Degeneration.

Researchers have more good news for those who enjoy eating fish. A meta-analysis published in the issue of Archives of Ophthalmology found that consumption of foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as fish and flax, is linked to a reduction in the risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) - a common eye disease which is the leading cause of severe vision loss among elderly people.

Chewing gum - the new post-operative medicine

researchers find chewing gum is a simple solution to the recovery of bowel function after gastrointestinal surgery . Chewing gum stimulate the smooth muscle fibers and secretion from the salivary and also stimulate the same nerves as eating and promotion the release of hormones that activate the gastro intestinal tract .

New Technique Will Speed The Development Of Vaccines

A team of Washington State University scientists has devised a method that could lead to the development of vaccines against some of the most troubling infectious diseases we face diseases that have so far been difficult to vaccinate against. The new method allows researchers to rapidly screen large numbers of pathogen proteins, called antigens, for their ability to prompt an immune response in a host. Proteins with that ability are good candidates for use in vaccines. The method will be especially valuable in the quest for vaccines against persistent diseases such as malaria, sleeping sickness and syphilis. A vaccine works by showing the body's immune system a pathogen or part of a pathogen (usually a protein) so that it can develop cellular memory and antibodies that will recognize and attack the pathogen in the future. A key step in the development of a vaccine is identifying which protein(s) to use. Until now, screening pathogen proteins to find those few that might be good candidates has been laborious, time-consuming, and in the case of persistent diseases, not very successful.The Team said prior methods required about three months to produce and purify a single protein to test. With her new method she is able to screen dozens of proteins within a few weeks. The new method starts with the pathogen's DNA. Previous work by WSU scientists had determined the whole genome sequence of Anaplasma. By comparing that sequence with the genome sequences of better-known microbes, researcher's are able to pinpoint genes that code for proteins that stick out of the pathogen's cell membrane. researcher's reasoned that since those proteins are exposed on the surface of the cell, they should be visible to antibodies and immune system cells, and therefore could be aterget for pathogen. Once the genes were isolated, the team made the proteins they coded for by using chemical 'machinery' derived from E. coli bacteria. They then purified each protein to get rid of any E. coli proteins that were present. They did that by using a chemical that would specifically bind to the Anaplasma proteins. The team attached the chemical to tiny synthetic beads and then poured the protein mixture over the beads. Anaplasma proteins stuck to the beads, while E. coli proteins did not and were discarded.

The *Mid Alert*® welcomes letters & contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Articles intended for publication should contain the writer's full name & preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request. Articles are subject to editing & abridging.