



# THE HEALING PLACE

## Health Ministry Team

*"wholeness of body, mind and spirit"*

### Spiritual Leaders

Father Joyle Martinez  
Father Felipe Paraguya

### Chair

Clara Heimericks, RN

### Members

Rhoda Araneta, RN  
Grace Bati, RN  
Paz Cajucom, RN  
Emilia Caoagas, LVN  
Rosemarie Cuaresma, RN  
Dana Dinh, RN  
Carmela Encina, RN  
Romy Encina, RN  
Margie Henry, RN  
Lottie Munsayac, RN  
Judy Niedzwiedz  
Monica Parker, LVN  
Bernie Silla, RN  
Mary Uwhuba, RN

### Regular Meetings

Second Thursday of every  
other month, 11:00 a.m.  
Religious Education Bldg,  
Rm #3 Call any member for  
more information

### Membership

You need not be a medical  
professional. If you are inter-  
ested in the Health Minis-  
try please call Clara  
Heimericks at 916-689-3932  
or the rectory at 916-381-

## MANAGING YOUR MEDICATIONS

You've probably heard the warn-  
ings not to drink grapefruit juice  
with cholesterol medication or to  
watch your daily intake of aceta-  
minophen. However, those aren't  
the only interactions of which to  
be aware. Many foods commonly  
interact with prescription medica-  
tions, over-the-counter medicines  
[OTC], as well as vitamin or herb-  
al supplements. Medications can  
interact with each other too. Do  
you know the basics?

### Five Foods that interact with medications.

**Grapefruit juice** increases the  
absorption of certain drugs, most-  
ly cholesterol-lowering statins. It  
also causes the body to metabo-  
lize drugs abnormally, resulting in  
lower or higher than normal blood  
levels of the drug. Affected med-  
ications include antihistamines,  
blood pressure drugs, thyroid re-  
placement drugs, birth control  
medications, stomach acid-  
blocking drugs, and some cough  
suppressants. Most other citrus  
juices do not cause such reac-  
tions because they don't contain  
the class of compounds called  
furanocoumarins, however, *Se-  
ville oranges and the pummelo,  
which are relatives of the grape-  
fruit, may be of concern.*

**Green Leafy Vegetables** which  
are high in vitamin K can de-  
crease the ability of blood-  
thinners to prevent clotting. You  
don't have to give them up, just  
don't suddenly increase or de-  
crease their intake.

## Natural Black Licorice

**(Glycyrrhiza)** can deplete the body  
of potassium while causing an in-  
creased retention of sodium. When  
the body is depleted of potassium,  
the activity of digoxin, a medica-  
tion used to treat heart failure, can  
be greatly enhanced, resulting in the  
heart not beating properly. Glycy-  
rrhiza can also decrease the effec-  
tiveness of high blood pressure med-  
icines, and people taking Couma-  
din® (warfarin) should be aware that  
glycyrrhiza can break down the drug  
resulting in an increase in the body's  
clotting mechanism.

**Salt Substitutes** should be used  
with care by those taking digoxin for  
heart failure or ACE inhibitors for  
high blood pressure. Salt substitutes  
most often replace sodium with po-  
tassium. With an increased con-  
sumption of potassium, the effective-  
ness of digoxin can be decreased,  
resulting in heart failure. Those tak-  
ing ACE inhibitors might see a signif-  
icant increase in blood potassium  
levels.

**Tyramine-Containing Foods** can  
cause an increase in blood pressure  
resulting in high blood levels of the  
amino acid tyramine. Several med-  
ications interfere with the break-  
down of tyramine, include Monoamine  
oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) sometimes  
used to treat depression, drugs used  
to treat the symptoms of Parkinson's  
disease, and many antibacterial  
medicines. Tyramine-rich foods in-  
clude cheeses, especially strong,  
aged or processed cheese, yogurt,  
sour cream, beef or chicken liver, dry  
sausage, caviar, dried or pickled her-  
ring, anchovies, meat extracts, meat  
tenderizers, avocados, bananas,

dried fruits, raspberries, over-ripe fruit, sauerkraut, soy beans and sauce, broad beans, and excessive amounts of chocolate and caffeine.

### Safe Dosage Basics

One of the most common medicines to control pain and fever is acetaminophen, probably because it does not irritate the stomach and intestinal lining. It's an important drug for controlling chronic pain in older adults. Taking too much acetaminophen can damage the liver sometimes leading to a liver transplant or death. The body breaks down a normal dose and eliminates it in the urine, but some of the drug is converted into a by-product that is toxic to the liver. If you take too much, all at once or over a period of days, more toxin can build up than the body can handle.

The average healthy adult should keep their acetaminophen to no more than 4,000 mg a day. So, does this mean you just watch the dosage on your bottle of acetaminophen and you're OK? Not necessarily.

There are more than 600 medicines that contain acetaminophen, including over the counter and prescription medicines. If you're concerned about how much you can tolerate, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. Remember these tips:

- ◆ many cold and flu remedies contain acetaminophene,
- ◆ know the milligrams in your pills,
- ◆ stick to recommended doses, and
- ◆ go easy on the alcohol. Drinking alcohol causes the liver to convert more of the acetaminophen you take into toxic by-products.

Tens of thousands of people become ill every year from taking too much acetaminophen. For several hundred people each year it leads to death. But it need not happen to you, read your labels, stick to the guidelines, and talk to your doctor if you are concerned.

For more information on medicines containing acetaminophen visit the Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition at <http://www.knowyourdose.org>.

### Medications and Dietary Supplements

Some dietary supplements increase the effect of your medication and others may decrease it. They can change the absorption, metabolism, or excretion of a medication and affect its potency. Combining medications and dietary supplements can have dangerous and even life threatening effects. For example, drugs for HIV/AIDS, heart disease,

depression, organ transplants, and birth control pills are less effective when taken with St. John's Wort. Warfarin, ginkgo biloba, aspirin and vitamin E can each thin the blood; taking any of these products together may increase the potential for internal bleeding or stroke.

If you're thinking about taking any dietary supplements talk with your medical professionals.

### Interactions With Other Medications

It's not unusual to take two or more medications at a time and it's possible that drug interactions could amplify or block the effect of one or more of the drugs. It's possible that the drugs may have similar side effects which can add up and adversely affect your health.

To avoid interactions work with your doctor to eliminate the unnecessary prescriptions you may be taking, adjust the time you take your medicines or supplements to decrease interactions, monitor your medicines closely, stick with the same pharmacy, have one doctor coordinate your care, speak up each time you get a prescription, and be mindful of possible interactions.

Sources: FDA, Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

#### Upcoming Health Ministry Events and Activities:

- ◆ **Sunday, May 6, and Sunday, June 3, Free Blood Pressure Screening Clinic—8:30—12:30 in the parish hall**

