

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Special thanks go out to all of our clients and friends who graciously referred our shop to their friends and neighbors last month! Our business is built based on the positive comments and referrals from people just like you. We just couldn't do it without you.

Pain Patches Can Be Fatal

The Food & Drug Administration is currently investigating deaths caused by the improper use of pain patches or medication delivered through a Band-Aid-type patch worn on the skin. Young children are particularly susceptible because they love wearing bandages.

The Institute for Safe Medicine Practices offers these suggestions to keep children from harm:

- ✓ Store patches safely. A high locked cabinet is best.
- ✓ Avoid attention. Try not to let children watch you apply the patches and don't call them "stickers." This could encourage kids to mimic your actions.
- ✓ Dispose of patches safely. Fold the sticky sides together and place them in a sturdy container — like an old pill bottle — preferably with a child-resistant cap. Or look in the drugstore for "sharps containers," which diabetics use for their insulin needles.
- ✓ Discard frequently. Whatever container you use to dispose of patches, remove it from your home frequently. The more used patches available, the more damage they can inflict.

Helpful Tip For Opening Jars

The next time you're faced with a stubborn jar lid, try one or more of these techniques:

1. Insert a triangular-tipped can opener, a butter knife, or a flat-edge screwdriver underneath the lid and gently pull the tool away from the jar until you pop the seal.
2. Wrap the lid in a dishtowel or square of rubber to create traction. Or wear a latex glove — or just place the glove over the lid as you turn it.
3. Wrap the lid in a wide rubber band, such as the kind that holds together bunches of vegetables, and slip one over the body of the jar for extra gripping traction.
4. Tap the side of the lid sharply against a countertop.
5. Invert the jar in a shallow dish of hot water for a few minutes.

A Great Seasoning Mix

People may want to use less salt in their food, but it's difficult to find seasoning without it. Lemon pepper, for example, contains a lot of salt.

Doctors at the Mayo Clinic say these common spices can mix together to create 1/4 cup of very good seasoning:

- * 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- * 5 teaspoons onion powder
- * 1 teaspoon thyme
- * 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- * 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- * 1 tablespoon paprika
- * 1/2 teaspoon celery seed

Taking a Spin

The exercise known as spinning, or using a stationary bicycle, is growing in popularity in gyms nationwide. Participants "ride" to music in a classroom setting while an instructor varies the routines by changing resistance, posture, and speed. According to the Toronto Bicycling Network, spinning is a great way to increase your aerobic capacity and endurance, as well as improve the cardiovascular system. There's less chance of injury, since knees bear less weight than in running, and spinning strengthens legs and muscle stamina. Plus, say advocates, the group setting keeps motivation high.

Is Automatic Bill Paying A Good Idea?

In 2004, there were nearly 12 billion automatic bill payment transactions in more than 12,000 financial institutions. That's a lot of bill paying. But is it safe?

According to "The risks of automatic bill paying," by Karin Price Mueller in Ladies Home Journal, there are some worries that consumers should be aware of. Here's what she says you need to guard against:

- The amount taken out of your account is the amount you agreed to. You need to monitor your debit and credit accounts to ensure that the amount does not change—or that you are possibly double-billed in one month.
- Beware of signing up for free trials that require a credit card number. Often these offers require you to cancel and will charge your account once a certain amount of time has passed.
- Monitor your accounts—even ones you have closed. There have been incidents of services, such as cable TV companies, etc., continuing to charge credit and debit accounts well after the services have been canceled.

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