

Generic Celebrex falls short of original med



Terry & Joe Graedon
People's Pharmacy

Question: I've been a longtime user of Celebrex. Then my pharmacy gave me the generic. After the first week, I had pain all over and found I could do fewer and fewer things I've always found easy. My hour of tai chi was nearly impossible.

My insurance will cover Celebrex, but not until the three-month supply of celecoxib is gone. So I have three months of misery in store.

Answer: Celecoxib (Celebrex) is a kind of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) called a COX-2 inhibitor. Supposedly, it is less likely to cause gastrointestinal irritation and ulcers than classic NSAIDs such as diclofenac, ibuprofen and naproxen.

There is controversy about its safety. The manufacturer warns that: "Serious skin reactions, or stomach and intestine problems such as bleeding and ulcers, can occur without warning and may cause death." Celebrex also may increase the risk for heart attacks or strokes.

Generic celecoxib is a relatively recent introduction, with four different companies making a formulation. The Food and Drug Administration is quite interested in hearing from people having trouble with celecoxib. Please make a report

to MedWatch at the FDA website (www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/).

Q: I have been looking for ways to get rid of rosacea and have tried a number of products during the seven years I've had this problem. Finally, a local herbalist gave me an herbal blend cream; the active ingredient was calendula. In two weeks, the rosacea had gotten much better, and I can honestly say that it has cured the long-term problem. I thought others would want to know.

A: Rosacea is an inflammatory skin condition. It often begins with easy flushing and proceeds to permanent redness and dilated blood vessels. Sometimes there are pimples, and if the skin of the nose is involved, it may appear bumpy or bulbous. Dermatologists have been looking at the properties of marigold because it may speed wound healing. We have not been able to find clinical trials of calendula extract for rosacea, although there are testimonials and calendula-containing creams on the Internet.

Should TV drug ads list fewer side effects?

If you watch television at all, chances are very good that you have seen commercials for prescription drugs like the sleeping pill Lunesta. The luna moth comes gliding in the window, bringing restful sleep to an insomniac who had been tossing and turning. Lucky for her she falls asleep before the announcer warns:

"Allergic reactions

such as tongue or throat swelling occur rarely and may be fatal. Side effects may include unpleasant taste, headache, dizziness and morning drowsiness. Ask your doctor if Lunesta is right for you."

There are dozens of other prescription drugs that have been advertised on television. These commercials often contain long lists of scary potential side effects.

The Food and Drug Administration is concerned that long lists of potential problems, including death, might confuse people and discourage them from taking advertised medicines. As a result, the agency is considering limiting the risks presented in direct-to-consumer drug ads on television and in print.

This is a significant departure from the FDA's previous policy to include important risk information in any advertising directed to the public.

This reversal has some consumer advocates concerned. Although leaders of the pharmaceutical industry have not been witnessed doing victory dances in the end zone, we suspect that they are privately pleased.

We're not sure that reducing the number of risks mentioned in drug ads will actually serve the public well. The best solution of all would be to eliminate direct-to-consumer advertising completely.

Joe Graedon has a master's degree in pharmacology and Dr. Teresa Graedon has a doctorate in medical anthropology. Visit peoplespharmacy.com.

Cole

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started the Nat King Cole Generation Hope Foundation, dedicated to introducing and keeping music in schools. "We have vicariously gotten to know him through other people, and it's very touching and bitter-sweet. We were watching (the film) going 'How did this happen?' We're the daughters of this incredible icon, we didn't get to know."

The crooner and accomplished piano player, whose smooth voice made songs like "Mona Lisa," "The Christmas Song," "Nature Boy" and others, was an international superstar who became the first African-American to have his own network show with NBC's 1956-57 "The Nat King Cole Show."

He served as a role model to younger musicians who saw barriers being broken.

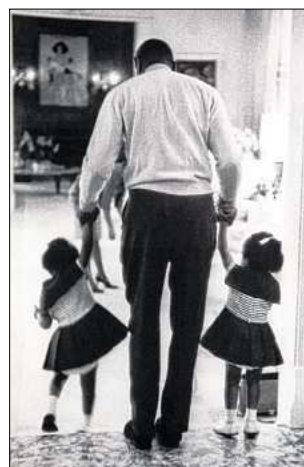
But his rise to legendary status was not without adversity — he, like other black performers, was prohibited from staying in the same Las Vegas hotels he headlined at.

Neighbors in Hancock Park, the tony Los Angeles neighborhood where Cole moved his family, were hostile, to the point where the family dog was poisoned.

And though Cole was, as he wrote in an Ebony magazine column, "the Jackie Robinson of television," he found that "the men who dictate what Americans see and hear didn't want to play ball."

Executives ordered him to be slathered in makeup to make his skin appear lighter. Advertisers were skittish. And after one disappointing season, the plug was pulled.

The Cole twins say that "Afraid Of The Dark" fulfilled Brewer's efforts "to really capture the overpowering internation-



Casey and Timolin, then 2, walk with their father, Nat King Cole, in their Los Angeles home in the early 1960s.

IF YOU GO

"Nat King Cole: Afraid of the Dark"
Palm Beach International Film Festival

Times: Monday, 7 p.m., Muvico Parisian 20, West Palm Beach;

Thursday, 6:30 p.m., Cobb Downtown at the Gardens, Palm Beach Gardens

Information: www.pbifilmfest.org

al appeal that Dad had, during a time where it was difficult to (achieve that) as an African-American because of the politics and disharmony, the racial tension going on here," Timolin says. "All the while he was having international acclaim abroad. It was amazing to see that. He was one of the first international pop stars."

Seeing her family relive those moments on-screen "was amazing, how much it hurt," Casey says. "We couldn't believe those things, the hatred that, unfortunately, still exists. It's something you're never, ever comfortable with, especially when your parents are

Executives ordered him to be slathered in makeup to make his skin appear lighter.

going through it. We were just saddened and angry about it."

Adding to the bitter-sweetness of the twins' first screening of "Afraid Of The Dark" was seeing their mother, who died not long after being interviewed for the documentary, and who they credit for crafting their father's eventual smooth image.

Casey says that Brewer had shown them "a raw, unedited version about a year before (the film's completion), and then we went to a private screening. He knew that would be the first time we had seen her. That was not easy."

Maria Cole's contribution to the film was significant, Casey says, because "she was very private about her family and about our dad, as it should be. She had a lot of pride and dignity. People always wanted to look for stuff that was not so wonderful, so glamorous or positive, so she was very, very happy to talk about everything else. She held that very close to her heart."

Ultimately, the twins say that "Afraid Of The Dark" was a labor of the heart.

"I think that his legacy is timeless, his goodwill, his humility," Timolin says. "His artistic excellence is timeless. He did what he was able to do, all the while being true to himself."

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ASK THE PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION SPECIALIST



Melisa Estes, M.D.

Is MRI always needed for back pain?

Question: I am having back pain. Why didn't my physician order an MRI?

Answer: Many patients feel that because they are having back pain, a physician needs an MRI to make an accurate diagnosis. This is actually a misconception. The majority of back pain is "mechanical back pain." This means that there isn't a neurologic component to the pain. There are multiple pain generators in the lumbar spine that can cause pain when they become inflamed or aggravated. Muscles in spasm, strained ligaments, and irritated facet joints will not show up on an MRI. A physician can make an accurate diagnosis through obtaining a history and performing a thorough physical examination. In many circumstances an X-ray will be ordered if it is appropriate.

It is important to realize that after age 35, 50 percent of patients will have an abnormal MRI. The findings may show degenerative or bulging discs or arthritis of the joints (spondylosis). The structures in the spine age just as the rest of the body ages.

An indication for ordering an MRI is new onset of neurologic symptoms such as weakness or numbness of the legs or impairment of the bowel or bladder. Also, if a patient has had trauma an MRI may be indicated. The spinal cord, disc, nerves, and acute fractures are well visualized on an MRI.

Dr. Estes is Board Certified in Pain Management and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. She completed her training at Emory University. Dr. Estes specializes in the treatment of non-operative musculoskeletal issues, and enjoys seeing her patients reach their full potential in pain-free living.

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Four locations: Jupiter, Palm Beach Gardens, Wellington, West Palm Beach (561) 694-7776
www.PBOI.com

ASK THE ADDICTION PROFESSIONAL



Ashley Morin, M.Ed, CAP

Role PTSD plays in addiction

The relationship between PTSD and substance abuse is complex and closely connected for many people.

Each of the disorders makes the other more likely. While a history of traumatic events increases the risk of developing substance abuse, substance abuse also increases the likelihood that a person will experience trauma.

Although not every person who experiences a traumatic event develops PTSD, it is important to note that traumatic experiences are significantly associated with the initiation and development of substance use disorders. It has been theorized that people use substances as an attempt to manage their experience of distress associated with the effects of trauma.

Conversely, substance use disorders increase a person's vulnerability to experience additional trauma since he or she is more likely to be in unsafe environments, have altered judgment, and have a decreased ability to defend oneself while using substances.

Since the experience of trauma-related symptoms can limit progress in substance abuse recovery, increase the potential for relapse, and complicate a client's ability to achieve success in various life areas, both addiction and trauma need to be assessed and treated if the individual is to have a full recovery.

Ashley Morin, a Certified Addictions Professional, is the Clinical Director of Origins of Hope (OOH), a premier treatment program for women. Utilizing holistic and evidence-based methods, OOH aids women in developing the skills necessary to overcome addiction and establish a solid foundation in recovery.

Origins of Hope
5511 Congress Ave., Suite 125
Lake Worth, FL 33463
(888) 508-0388

ASK THE NEUROSURGEON



Charles S. Theofilos, MD, Board Certified Neurosurgeon Platelet rich plasma booster

Have you ever spent an afternoon scrubbing the floors to have someone walk through with muddy shoes and ruin all your efforts and hard work? Your body can react in the same way with regenerative therapies. If you allow the original degenerative factors to creep back in while the restorative process is occurring, your body may not heal as well.

Injured joints and discs can become very acidic creating a hostile environment to stem-cells. Because stem-cells can do very little in terms of self-preservation, they can fall victim to this unforgiving environment. Ideally, the joint or disc has been "pre-treated" by your physician with a specialized protein isolated from your blood before the stem-cells are injected, thus neutralizing the acidity and improving the regenerative process.

Because regeneration is a slow process, in time the joint or disc may attempt to return to the previous acidic state. Thus, the final stage of our three-step method is to inject platelet rich plasma (PRP) derived from your own blood into the joint or disc a few weeks after stem-cell implantation. PRP provides extra nutrients that allow the stem-cells to flourish. PRP also reduces the joint or disc's capacity to become hostile to the stem-cells while they are regenerating damaged tissues. By giving the stem-cells a booster injection of nutrients, they will have the best chance to heal the joint or disc.

Call us at 561-630-3870 to find out about our FREE MRI review.

The Spine Center delivers state-of-the-art care and treatment under the guidance of Neurosurgeon and founder Charles S. Theofilos, M.D. He is a leading provider of the most comfortable and effective surgical and non-surgical treatment options for a full range of cervical and spinal ailments. Dr. Theofilos serves as Chief of Neurosurgery for Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center. He is among a field of 20 top neuro and orthopedic surgeons in the U.S. chosen to participate in the groundbreaking Artificial Disc Study, which compares the clinical outcome of disc replacement versus traditional spinal fusion.

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