



The Toilet Paper

Division of Student Affairs



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GARDASIL. Gardasil is a very effective vaccine at preventing women from becoming infected with HPV, the virus that causes genital warts and most cases of cervical cancer. At the same time, Gardasil's high price tag—at least \$400 or more for the series of three shots—serves as a very effective barrier for women who want it but can't afford it because they have no insurance or have insurance that won't pay for it (including Eastern's sponsored insurance plan Chickering). For those who find themselves in this situation, the Willimantic Planned Parenthood (423-8426) offers an extremely low cost option. It will administer each of the three shots for just \$21 apiece. There is also a one-time office fee of about \$30-40 for just the first visit. Total cost for all 3 shots: somewhere around \$90 -110. At that price, it's a steal. (By the way, chances are most if not all Planned Parenthoods in Connecticut and elsewhere offer similar deals.)

Upcoming Events



STD Q & A: NOTHING TO CLAP ABOUT

Q: I recently found out that I had gonorrhea and was given an injection of medicine to treat it. I hate needles but was told that this was my only option. What gives? ~Achy Arm in Ashford

Dear AAA: The situation with gonorrhea definitely has gotten a little bit scarier lately. Like other bacterial germs that cause human illness, gonorrhea has grown increasingly resistant to many different antibiotics making it much harder to treat. Used to be that a number of oral medications could easily cure this disease but, over time, they have become less effective. So much so that, in April of this year, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended no longer using them and, instead, going with the injection medication you got. So, yes, the treatment choices for gonorrhea are now very limited which makes not getting the disease in the first place all the more important. Sexual abstinence is one way to do that. If that is not something you choose to do then, for crying out loud, at least you and any partner you become involved with should discuss the issue of STDs and both of you get tested before you engage in sexual activity. **AND USE CONDOMS!** By doing so, you could save yourself a lot more worries and pain than just a shot in the arm.

1,6-dichloro-1,6-dideoxy-beta-D-fructofuranosyl 4-chloro-4-deoxy-alpha-D-galactopyranoside....otherwise known as Splenda

Last of three parts 

Concerns over the safety of artificial sweeteners have been around for as long these products have been on supermarket shelves and that is no less true for Splenda (sucralose). Those who question its safety correctly point out the fact that a small but significant amount of Splenda does get taken up into our blood stream. McNeil, the maker of Splenda, conducted limited, lab animal research looking at this issue prior to FDA approval and, from that, reported no serious internal health effects related to the sweetener or its metabolites. Still, critics argue that no long term studies have been done to determine if Splenda is a possible health risk once it is absorbed into our bodies. Furthermore, to some this becomes an even more relevant issue given the following concern.

In the process of making Splenda, chlorine atoms are added to regular sugar molecules. Chemically speaking, this means Splenda is a chlorohydrocarbon compound. Why is that a concern? Because many chlorohydrocarbons such as solvents and pesticides are harmful to humans. They have been linked to nervous system and liver damage among other things. Since Splenda technically is a type of chlorohydrocarbon, the argument goes that it, like the others, may be hazardous to human health. While, intuitively, this may make sense, no scientific evidence currently exists to support the contention that Splenda is a dangerous substance. Moreover, in the nine years since Splenda's arrival, no trends have been seen that would suggest this to be the case. Skeptics, however, say that, during those same nine years, no effort has ever been made to actually look for potential health problems associated with this sugar substitute and, therefore, that leaves the question of its safety unanswered.

Aside from these two major concerns, complaints of Splenda-related rashes, headaches, gastrointestinal distress and other symptoms have surfaced over the years. However, linking these problems directly to sucralose can be difficult given the many ingredients and additives found in our food and beverages. Nonetheless, it wouldn't be surprising if some individuals were sensitive to the sweetener just as other people are sensitive to a variety of things we consume.

So should you include Splenda in your diet? Well, despite some questions over its safety, nothing out there we could find at this time says you shouldn't. But, it may be worth keeping in mind that too much of anything may not be good whether that be Splenda or sugar itself. Perhaps Aristotle had it right when he said, "Moderation in all things."



Shaving Time off Your Shaving Time

Men, are you tired of having to shave so much? Does five o'clock shadow start creeping across your face by noon? Does your significant other frequently complain about your unsightly and uncomfortable facial stubble? If you answered yes to any or all of these questions then maybe you'd be interested in checking out the growing number of new aftershave products and overnight treatments known as hair retardants. According to a recent NY Times article, plant extracts in these products are thought to slow down facial hair growth by interfering with the activity of the hair follicles. That could translate into less frequent need to shave as well as cut down on razor burn, bumps and irritation. And that could mean softer skin. Because scientific research is lacking, some dermatologists remain skeptical. Nonetheless, these products, with names like Clarin's *Men Skin Difference* and Lab Series for Men *Triple Benefit Post-Shave Remedy*, have their supporters and are becoming increasingly popular. If you'd like to learn more, you can find the entire NY Times article at www.nytimes.com; click on "NYT Archive" then search "hair retardants." (Note: Neither the Editorial Board of the Toilet Paper nor its medical consultant endorses the use of any products mentioned here.)