



VITALS

A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

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Is Anything Safe?

A recent FDA advisory hit close to home. Someone in my family offered me some Voltaren Gel 1 % (diclofenac sodium topical gel) to ease some pain in my knees. I get about 15-20 FDA and other safety notices daily and fortunately remembered this one.

Cases of hepato-toxicity related to Voltaren have occurred within the first month of use, but may occur anytime during treatment with diclofenac. Severe hepatic reactions including liver necrosis, jaundice, fulminant hepatitis with and without jaundice, and liver failure were found during post-marketing surveillance. The liver problems have been severe enough that some patients required transplants. Fatalities were reported. The FDA recommends the monitoring of liver enzymes in people receiving Voltaren. Check with your doctor. Who would have thought that rubbing some stuff on your knee might kill your liver?

A study in the January 2010 issue of "Microbiology", suggests that using common disinfectants could make some microbes resistant to antibiotics. The researchers took *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and grew it in the presence of benzalkonium chloride. The bug became 12 times less susceptible to the disinfectant. Frighteningly, the bug became 256 times more resistant to ciprofloxacin (US Brand names Ciloxan, Cipro, Cipro XR and Proquin XR)-even though the bacteria had never been exposed to the antibiotic! The bacteria not only developed the ability to pump out both the antibiotic and the disinfectant from their cells, they had a DNA mutation that made them resistant to ciprofloxacin type drugs.

There is some thought that the use of overly diluted disinfectants might leave a residue in which resistant bugs become dominant. It's crucial to make certain you use the correct concentration of solution. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines and incorporate them into cleaning policies and procedures. Monitor cleaning performance.

A woman from Sturgis, South Dakota, was arrested for DUI with a BAT of 0.708. For about half the population, a BAT of 0.40 is considered lethal. She was found passed out behind the wheel of a stolen delivery van. After a brief hospitalization, she was freed on bond. She missed a court date and was found sitting in another stolen car in a ditch. I hope she wasn't rubbing anything on her knees that could hurt her liver.

