

Doctors' Choice

Our medical experts scoured the aisles to pick the best over-the-counter products

by Margit Feury and Lambeth Hochwald

Photographs by Theresa Raffetto

women's health

Laura E. Riley, M.D., an obstetrician and gynecologist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, gives us her recommendations. *Margit Feury*

PREGNANCY/OVULATION EPT and First Response

OTC pregnancy tests do work. EPT (\$9.99) seems to be the easiest, with simple instructions and clear results. Ovulation predictors, such as First Response (\$28.59/5-test kit), are also useful.



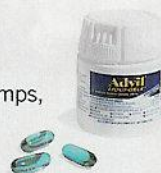
GAS/BLOATING

Gas-X
If you suffer from bloating or gas regularly or during your period, anti-gas medications such as Gas-X (\$5.79/36 pack) may be effective. "Adding more fiber to your diet can also help."



MENSTRUATION

Ibuprofen or Naproxen
For painful menstrual cramps, ibuprofen (Motrin IB or Advil, \$9.99/80 Gelcaps) works well for many women. If you experience gastric upset from ibuprofen, try naproxen (Aleve, \$3.49/24 caplets), which can be more gentle on the stomach. "When pain is at its worst I advise my patients to take the recommended dosage of naproxen every twelve hours." It can also



URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

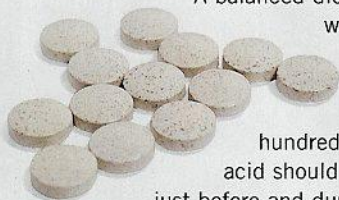


Uristat
Often marked by a painful and constant need to urinate, urinary tract infections must be treated with antibiotics. But if one hits before you can see a doctor,

Uristat (\$5.99/12 pack) may relieve some of the pain and discomfort. "But as soon as you can, even if you feel better, contact your doctor."

FOR WOMEN OF CHILDBEARING AGE

Daily Supplement
A balanced diet and a supplement with iron and folic acid is essential. "To help prevent birth defects, four hundred micrograms of folic acid should be consumed daily just before and during pregnancy."



MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

Soy
The data on whether or not soy supplements or soy foods help eliminate menopausal symptoms is still inconclusive. "But if you're having night sweats and hot flashes, a soy supplement won't hurt. Also, try avoiding caffeine, alcohol and spicy food, and wear loose clothing." See the Healthy Cook column on page 126 for recipes using soy.



YEAST INFECTIONS

Monistat
Many women know the classic signs of a yeast infection: itching, discharge and odor. There are now a variety of OTC remedies available. "If you're not pregnant, use the three-day Monistat treatment option (\$14.99). If you are pregnant, use the seven-day formula (\$16.99) since it may be a more stubborn infection." If the infection does not clear up, see your gynecologist to make sure that it really is a yeast infection and not something else.



Unscented Sanitary Pads
"Some women suffer from contact dermatitis, which causes itching and irritation, when they use scented sanitary napkins. Unscented pads work just as well."



Always check with your physician before starting an exercise plan or taking a dietary supplement.

Debra J. Wattenberg, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City, says the drugstore has great skincare solutions. But, she warns, know your skin type and don't double up on products containing benzoyl peroxide or other active ingredients.

Lambeth Hochwald

CLEANSERS

Daily Facials for Combination/Oily Skin by Olay

"The beta hydroxy acids in these cloths will help unclog and clean out pores." Plus they're convenient and disposable, which makes them perfect for travel (\$6.99/box).



Cetaphil Cleanser

"This product is great for dry, sensitive skin. It's nonalkaline and noncomedogenic, so it doesn't promote blackheads or clog pores" (\$6.99/8 oz).



ACNE PRODUCTS

Facewipes To Go by Stridex

Wrapped individually, these are perfect for busy women. "If you go to the gym and want to freshen up, especially if you have a tendency to break out after exercising, these are ideal. The salicylic acid helps degrease the skin and unclog pores, preventing future breakouts" (\$4.99/32 pack).



Maximum Vanishing Acne Treatment by Oxy

This 10 percent benzoyl peroxide cream kills the bacteria that cause pimples and also contains oil-free moisturizers to prevent overdrying. "Control how much you use. Too much can cause additional irritation" (\$4.99/1 oz).



FOR VERY DRY SKIN

Healing Ointment from Aquaphor

Dry, chapped lips as well as dry, rough hands and cuticles will love this cream. "It's greasy like Vaseline but it absorbs easily and it's fragrance-free. It's good for any dry patch" (\$6.99/3.5 oz).



BODY WASH

All Day Moisturizing Body Wash by Dove

This product comes in Deep Moisture for dry skin, Fresh Moisture for normal skin and Unscented for sensitive skin. "It's a soap-free body wash that contains extra-mild cleansers. Plus, it's a perfect substitute for shaving cream" (\$4.89/12 oz).



EYE CREAMS

Healthy Skin Eye Cream by Neutrogena

This product boosts hydration around the eyes. "It has alpha hydroxy acids that ease away the appearance of fine lines and vitamins that combat the effects of pollution and smoke" (\$12.99/0.5 oz).



RevitaLift Eye Anti-Wrinkle and Firming Cream by L'Oréal Plénitude

"The pro-retinol A in this product hydrates the skin." It also contains par-elastyl, which may help increase skin's firmness and reduce morning puffiness (\$12.99/0.5 oz).



MASKS

Clear Pore Cleanser/Mask by Neutrogena

Avoid scrubs that contain fragrance. "The goal is to not irritate your skin." Instead, try this antibacterial mask and cleanser in one, which kills bacteria and blackheads and helps dry up breakouts. Good for all skin types (\$6.49/4.2 oz).



MOISTURIZERS

Retinol Actif Pur Anti-Wrinkle Day Treatment by RoC

If you're looking to reduce hyperpigmentation (age spots) or fine lines, try this product. It contains UVA and UVB filters to protect against future sun damage as well as vitamin A. "Plus, the retinol in this product helps to exfoliate and remove blackheads" (\$17.99/1 oz).



Purpose by Johnson & Johnson

Always choose a daytime moisturizer that contains an SPF of at least 15. "In addition, this product is oil-free, hypoallergenic and noncomedogenic" (\$8.99/4 oz).



ANTIAGING PRODUCTS

Age Decelerating Daily Cream by Almay Kinetin

Antiaging products can really help to improve your skin's radiance, minimize pore size and erase discoloration. Look for products with retinols, alpha hydroxy and glycolic acids or kinetin, which is found in green leafy plants and has been clinically proven to prevent visible signs of aging while maximizing the skin's ability to retain moisture. "This is a hypoallergenic, age-decelerating cream with SPF 15." Discontinue use if you notice dryness or sun sensitivity (\$15.99/1.6 oz).



SUNSCREEN

Ultra Sweatproof by Coppertone Sport

"If you're spending the day at the beach, a moisturizer with SPF 15 is not enough." This sunscreen has both UVA and UVB protection (\$9.99/8 oz).



When Sickness Strikes

There are many OTC products that help calm symptoms while your immune system fights the infection or virus that is causing them. *WD* health advisory board member Robert Carr, M.D., director of the family practice residency program at Georgetown University, advises his patients to choose products with the fewest ingredients. "If you've got a fever, you don't need a sinus medication," he says. Below, some suggestions for the most common symptoms:

- For nasal congestion, a drug with pseudoephedrine (Sudafed Non-Drowsy) will relieve symptoms and sinus pressure.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) will help bring down a fever.
- For allergies, look for antihistamines such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl Allergy Ultratab Tablets) or chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton).
- For a cough, you need a product that contains dextromethorphan (Robitussin DM) to clear congestion and suppress the cough.

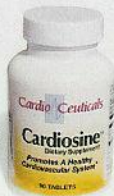
nutrition

Barbara Levine, R.D., Ph.D., associate professor of medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University, says, "You don't need a shoebox full of vitamins to get what you need." Below, her picks. **LH**

HEART HEALTH

Cardiosine

This supplement, which contains inosine, was formulated by a cardiologist. "Studies show it may prevent many cardiac problems, from coronary heart disease to stroke." A Harvard University study showed it may help restore nerve function after a stroke (\$26.95/90 pills, www.cardioceuticals.com).



Cycladol

A recent study found this nutraceutical reduced LDL (bad) cholesterol by 30 percent and raised HDL (good) cholesterol by 33 percent. "Cycladol has potent anti-inflammatory effects, and inflammation is one of the newest risk factors for heart attack" (\$23.95/90 pills, www.cardioceuticals.com).



Neuromins DHA

Made from algae, this omega-3 fatty acid helps raise HDL cholesterol, lower triglycerides, reduce blood pressure and boost mental and visual acuity. It's available as a separate supplement or as an ingredient in a multi-supplement (prices vary).



BONE HEALTH



Flexium Joint Comfort & Cartilage Renewal

To help stave off arthritis, this supplement contains S-adenosylmethionine (SAM-e), a natural compound that maintains flexibility and reduces joint discomfort, as well as

glucosamine, which helps build cartilage and cushion joints. "This product can help with joint pain, and it has fewer side effects than anti-inflammatory medications" (\$28.99/40 tablets).

Tums

These chewable tablets contain 500 milligrams of calcium carbonate, which is key for healthy bones (\$3.99/150 tablets).



EYE HEALTH

FloraGLO Lutein

Researchers at Harvard University found that getting 6 milligrams of lutein (an antioxidant that helps maintain healthy eyes) a day—the amount in about half a cup of spinach—lowered the chances of developing macular degeneration by 43 percent. In addition, lutein may reduce cancer risk and prevent thickening of the arteries. "If you can't eat that much spinach, FloraGLO Lutein works well. It's an ingredient in many multivitamins, or it can be bought as a separate supplement" (prices vary).



OVERALL HEALTH

Centrum Advanced Formula

"This multivitamin gives you a daily dose of everything you need, including zinc, a mineral that has been long overlooked and is important for its immune system boost. It also contains copper, vitamin E, beta-carotene and some antioxidants" (\$6.99/50 tablets).

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PMS OR MIGRAINES

Slow-Mag

If you experience severe PMS or migraines, magnesium supplements might help. Slow-Mag is a time-release supplement that doesn't cause gastrointestinal side effects. "Magnesium is essential for the functioning of every cell, yet sixty percent of us don't meet the RDA" (\$9.99/60 tablets).

