

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



A Lesson Belatedly Learned

Remember my recent story about Pat's tinnitus (constant chirping in her ears)? I watched as she eliminated suspected causes one by one (including chocolate, red wine, and aspirin) to determine that aspirin was a significant amplifier of her condition. I should have been paying closer attention!

My chief medical issue right now is coronary heart disease for which my doctor has prescribed cholesterol and blood pressure control meds for several years.

At a recent checkup, my doctor wasn't satisfied with my test results so he prescribed a different, stronger cholesterol medication, added a new blood pressure medicine, and also decided to change the prostate med I was taking for a minor condition. I was supposed to finish the "old" cholesterol and prostate meds before transitioning to the new ones, and start the additional blood pressure medicine right away.

By coincidence I was just about ready to order a new three-month supply of the old meds, so I immediately switched to the new ones, thankful for how efficiently (financially) that worked out. And, I was concerned about my high blood pressure. So I changed two drugs and added a new, third one on the same day!

The next several days were not comfortable ones. I experienced lots of side effects, including headache, nausea, diarrhea, light-headedness, and weakness. I checked the potential side effects on my new prescriptions and was disheartened to find that all three could cause these problems. For several days I monitored my blood pressure. I couldn't tell what drug was doing what to me!

So changing multiple drugs at the same time is not a good idea. I should have remembered Pat's example and changed one at a time, with enough time in between, to evaluate my tolerance to each med.

Thankfully, and luckily, the side effects diminished over the next week or so, as my body adjusted to the new medicines. I see the doctor again in January; I'm confident that the new tests will show the benefit of the new drugs.

Meanwhile, happy holidays to you from Bob and Pat!