

Member to Member

Helpful Hints, Inspiration and Other Musings

This is a new column in *Nuevas Amigas*. Here we invite members to share their hints for making life in Madrid easier, more fun and more fulfilling. Members are free to write on any subject that they wish to share with other members.

Pharmaceutical Relief Available

I am writing this in hopes that this information can help other woman who like me sometimes suffer from urinary tract infections. I find that when the cold weather sets in, I am most prone to this problem. I've tried many natural remedies (cranberry juice by the liter found at the American foods store in Madrid) and of course drinking a great deal of water. This can help relieve some of the symptoms, but I usually contact my doctor who suggests a urine test and then a dose of an antibiotic. I try to avoid taking medicine unless it is absolutely necessary.

If you've had this problem, you usually know what it is right away and you know that you need treatment as soon as possible. I recently found myself in this very uncomfortable situation, called my doctor and she informed me that one of the most effective medicines for this problem could be bought over the counter without a prescription in Spain. She had given me a written prescription for the same medicine on another occasion and I found it very fast and effective, so I was pleasantly surprised to know that I could go to my local pharmacy and start the treatment immediately.

The name of the medicine is Monurol 3g. It is an antibiotic that has been designed to target these types of urinary tract infections. There are two envelopes in the package. The powder is mixed with water and has a fairly pleasant lemon taste. The first envelope is taken the first day and the second the day after much easier than a week's worth of pills, three times a day, as with most antibiotics. Taking any type of medicine has its risks, so please be prudent and check with your doctor before doing so.

-Paula Owen Viola

No Laughing Matter

A stock clerk was sent to clean up a storeroom in Maui, Hawaii. When he got back, he was complaining that the storeroom was really filthy and that he had noticed dried mouse or rat droppings in some areas. A couple of days later, he started to feel like he was

coming down with a stomach flu, complained of sore joints and headaches, and began to vomit. He went to bed and never really got up again. Within two days he was severely ill and weak. His blood sugar count was down to 66, and his face and eyeballs were yellow. He was rushed to the emergency at Pali-Momi, where he was diagnosed to be suffering from massive organ failure. He died shortly before midnight.

No one would have made the connection between his job and his death, had it not been for a doctor who specifically asked if he had been in a warehouse or exposed to dried rat or mouse droppings at any time. They said there is a virus (much like the Hanta virus) that lives in dried rat and mouse droppings. Once dried, these droppings are like dust and can easily be breathed in or ingested if a person does not wear protective gear or fails to wash face and hands thoroughly.

An autopsy was performed on the clerk to verify the doctor's suspicions.

This is why it is extremely important to ALWAYS carefully rinse off the tops of canned sodas or foods, and to wipe off pasta packaging, cereal boxes, and so on.

Almost everything you buy in a supermarket was stored in a warehouse at one time or another, and stores themselves often have rodents.

Most of us remember to wash vegetables and fruits but never think of boxes and cans.

The ugly truth is, even the most modern, upper class, super store has rats and mice. And their warehouse most assuredly does!

Whenever you buy any canned soft drink, please make sure that you wash the top with running water and soap or, if that is not available, drink with a straw.

The investigation of soda cans by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta discovered that the tops of soda cans be encrusted with dried rat's urine, which is so toxic it can be lethal. Canned drinks and other foodstuffs are stored in warehouses and containers that are usually infested with rodents, and then they get transported to retail outlets without being properly cleaned.

-Susan Milla

