

Here are this week's health care news highlights from AskaPatient:

- Panera Bread is allegedly being investigated as the source of a possible E. coli outbreak in New Jersey. <http://ow.ly/7tBD30jnAAt> (04-09-18)
- Michigan ends its free bottled water program, saying safe drinking water has been restored, though some say otherwise. <http://ow.ly/SF1R30jnAD2> (04-09-18)
- A rise in the number of people taking long term antidepressants is creating an unanticipated problem for many who want to quit. <http://ow.ly/5fFG30jnAle> (04-09-18)
- New approach in stroke treatment shows promise in enhancing the brain's ability to rewire itself. <http://ow.ly/cph630jnB1t> (04-10-18)
- Merck's Keytruda helps lung cancer patients live longer in a late-stage trial, potentially putting it at the head of the pack of lung cancer treatments. <http://ow.ly/Eq3Y30jp58L> (04-10-18)
- Scientists may be able to fix a gene in order to neutralize the genetic risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. <http://ow.ly/Fcxc30jp5aS> (04-10-18)
- Women are most at risk of heart failure in the 6 weeks after giving birth, death rate double that of 30 years ago. <http://ow.ly/GQSi30jqmCC> (04-11-18)
- Researchers propose new definition for Alzheimer's based on biological changes rather than clinical symptoms. <http://ow.ly/rsvN30jqmPV> (04-11-18)
- UK sees record number of organ donors and the highest increase in the last 28 years. <http://ow.ly/1rjE30jqmXC> (04-11-18)
- Caltech scientists induce sensations in the arm of a paralyzed man by stimulating associated brain region. <http://ow.ly/3V5830jqn1z> (04-12-18)
- FDA allows the sale of an AI device that detects eye damage caused by diabetes, thus increasing screenings. <http://ow.ly/Fri230jrM1T> (04-12-18)
- Adhesive skin patch could replace painful blood tests for millions of diabetics by testing glucose from skin cells. <http://ow.ly/lhm430jrM5x> (04-12-18)
- Man diagnosed with excruciating "thunderclap headaches" after eating the world's hottest pepper. <http://ow.ly/cA8N30jrM8r> (04-13-18)
- Even one night of restricted sleep can cause buildup of proteins in the brain associated with Alzheimer's disease. <http://ow.ly/p8Rs30jrMeP> (04-13-18)
- People with a 'genetic sweet tooth' are likely to have less body fat but predisposed to slightly higher blood pressure. <http://ow.ly/grwU30jsURX> (04-13-18)
- Four years after a Chinese couple's death, their baby was born to a surrogate according to the wishes of the grandparents. <http://ow.ly/CrZ030jsV9D> (04-14-18)
- Results of a small study suggest long hours of sitting are associated with thinning of a brain region critical for memory. <http://ow.ly/MnKK30jsViG> (04-14-18)
- Heart rate recovery 10 seconds after stopping exercise is predictive of all-cause mortality in large study. <http://ow.ly/QNoE30jsVsa> (04-14-18)

From AskaPatient: a look at OTC nasal spray allergy medications

Today's allergy patient could spend a very long time at the drugstore browsing through all of the medications available without a prescription. Allergy relief medications can be sorted into at least five categories of over-the-counter treatments: 1) newer less-drowsy antihistamine oral tablets (such as Claritin and Zyrtec), 2) older antihistamines that will cause more drowsiness (such as Benadryl and Chlor-trimeton), 3) antihistamine eye drops 4) antihistamine nasal sprays, and 5) **steroid nasal sprays**.

Allergy doctors today typically recommend the steroid nasal sprays as the first-line of treatment, since they are considered to be the most effective treatment category. However, some patients report unpleasant side effects including dizziness, insomnia, and anxiety. Popular steroid nasal sprays include:

| OTC Nasal Spray Allergy Drug | Rating |
|--|---------------|
| Flonase (FLUTICASONE PROPIONATE) | 2.1 |
| Rhinocort (BUDESONIDE) | 2.3 |
| Nasacort (TRIAMCINOLONE ACETONIDE) | 2.3 |

Key to Ratings: 1=LOW (I would not recommend taking this medicine.)
5=HIGH (this medicine cured me or helped me a great deal.)

Click here for a list of more than 15 **Rx and OTC Allergy Nasal Sprays** in the steroid nasal spray category and links to patient reviews and effectiveness summaries.

Head-to-head study comparing Flonase vs. Zyrtec

A 2015 study* compared the effectiveness of the commonly used steroid nasal spray fluticasone propionate (used in **Flonase**) with a commonly used allergy tablet (cetirizine, used in brand name **Zyrtec** medication). Almost 1,000 patients participated in the head-to-head study, with patients taking one of the following for two weeks during the fall ragweed season: the spray, spray placebo, the pill, or the pill placebo. The findings: fluticasone propionate nasal spray and cetirizine tablet were equally effective in treating fall seasonal allergic rhinitis during the 2-week treatment investigation.

* *A comparison of fluticasone propionate nasal spray and cetirizine in ragweed fall seasonal allergic rhinitis.*

[Allergy Asthma Proc.](#) 2015 Jul-Aug;36(4):313-9. doi: 10.2500/aap.2015.36.3860. The author was affiliated with Asthma and Allergy Center, Bellevue, Nebraska, USA.

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