

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

- Study of Chinese high school students reveals habitual nappers see greater neurocognitive function. <http://ow.ly/OCUL30jJby> (04-30-18)
- Analysis of 1.2 million children reaffirms that there is no relationship between vaccines and autism. <http://ow.ly/bbRq30jJhD> (04-30-18)
- A poor night's sleep increases thoughts of suicide in people with depression. <http://ow.ly/QpVy30jJt4> (04-30-18)
- Migraines cost UK the equivalent of 86 million workdays and £8.8 billion in productivity every year. <http://ow.ly/ERoa30jLtHx> (05-01-18)
- Novel study finds non-smokers and vapers have similar gut flora, while smokers have significant changes in their microbiome. <http://ow.ly/nCT430jLtID> (05-01-18)
- Sticking with these five healthy habits adds over a decade to life expectancy, analysis of 123,000 people reveals. <http://ow.ly/fl6K30jLlTR> (05-01-18)
- Hemophilia B successfully treated for life with one injection in proof of concept mouse study. <http://ow.ly/XA3h30jMJma> (05-02-18)
- Diseases spread by tick, mosquito, and flea bites have tripled in recent years, including 9 that are new to the U.S. <http://ow.ly/JXC530jMJsN> (05-02-18)
- Nationwide survey shows that Americans are a lonely group, with younger generations feeling lonelier than older ones. <http://ow.ly/YHzG30jMzO> (05-02-18)
- Clinical trials that focused on reducing proteins in the brain associated with dementia failed, and scientists now have an explanation. <http://ow.ly/8yJi30jNW1W> (05-03-18)
- Measuring brain activity as early as 3 months of age could predict the likelihood of a child developing autism. <http://ow.ly/BzQh30jNW5H> (05-03-18)
- Scientists think they can selectively inhibit the growth of specific microbes associated with certain diseases. <http://ow.ly/UF3x30jNWc2> (05-03-18)
- Phase 3 clinical trial once again fails to successfully treat Alzheimer's despite reducing levels of brain plaque. <http://ow.ly/ipvR30jPe2Y> (05-04-18)
- People who frequently take saunas have a much lower risk of stroke, according to new research out of Finland. <http://ow.ly/wiB330jPe79> (05-04-18)
- CEO of a biohacking company is found dead after injecting himself with an untested DIY herpes drug. <http://ow.ly/hOMJ30jPedZ> (05-04-18)
- Children who grow up in rural areas around animals may be at a lower risk of mental illness than those raised in the city with no pets. <http://ow.ly/lxul30jNWV> (05-05-18)
- Retinal prosthesis could restore sight to blind people and can be made using cheap organic printing inks. <http://ow.ly/jCz130jPenf> (05-05-18)
- New Jersey woman receives \$5,751 ER bill for an ice pack and a bandage. <http://ow.ly/KccN30jPelu> (05-05-18)

From AskaPatient: Herbal medicines: three reputable sources of information: NCCIH, NLM, and HMPC

Since the FDA does not review the effectiveness of herbal medicines, there is no national database of "approved" plant-based remedies. However, the U.S. does have an agency for scientific research on medical practices and products that are generally not considered part of conventional medicine: the **National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH)**. The NCCIH web site has a section with fact sheets on more than 50 popular herbal medicines. Echinacea for colds, St. John's Wort for depression, kava extract for anxiety, turmeric for inflammation, and valerian root for insomnia are just a sampling of the herbal medicines that are featured. NCCIH web site's [A-Z list](#) of complementary health topics covers additional medicines and alternative treatments.

Various other U.S. government organizations, including the National Cancer Institute and the National Library of Medicine (NLM), also maintain information on various herbal and dietary supplements. [NLM's MedlinePlus](#) herbs and supplements database has a comprehensive A-Z list of dietary supplements, sometimes linking to the government agency which has more information on the treatment, and sometimes providing its own fact sheet.

Since 1995, the **European Medicine Agency**, a decentralized agency of the European Union, has been responsible for evaluating and monitoring the safety and efficacy of medicines (human and veterinary) in the EU. It is the equivalent agency to the FDA in the U.S. The committee which assesses **herbal substances** is its [Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products](#) (HMPC).

The HMPC database provides the status of stages of assessment for each herbal product, along with associated scientific and other review documents. You can search by herbal medicine name, type of treatment, or browse the names A-Z. Click here for HMPC [herbal medicine search](#). Scroll to the bottom of the page for the tabs that provide ways to find the herbal medicine information. At the end of the assessment process, HMPC's final conclusions about the herbal substance are published in the [European Union herbal monograph](#).

In recent months, patients have requested the following **non-FDA** approved drugs to be placed in the AskaPatient database. Please share your experience if you have taken either of these **alternative** medicines:

[Medical marijuana](#) – cannabis; for various uses including epilepsy, nausea, cancer, MS, parkinson's, and more.

[Armour Thyroid](#) – a natural alternative to Synthroid; for Hashimoto's or hypo-thyroid or low thyroid

The links above go to the ratings forms for these treatments.

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