

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Save the Silver for a Ring

About a year ago this column raised a lot of questions about the safety and value of plastic food storage containers with silver in them. Supposedly the silver would kill bacteria and keep your food safe longer. There are still a lot of questions about how well that would really work. Now, however, it seems that people have decided to skip the plastic container and eat the silver.

The results have been quite interesting. At least one man has been sent to the emergency room because he was turning blue! Turns out the blue color was not from being cold! He had mixed up his own concoction of colloidal silver using baking soda, silver wires and an electrical current. Whenever he thought a cold was coming on, he gave himself several doses. Back in the 1920's a circus had a 'blue man'. He worked in silver mines when he was young, until he turned blue. After he died an autopsy said he had over 3 ounces of silver in his body.

There actually is a medical name for what happens when you're exposed to too much silver. It's called 'argyria'. The skin turns bluish grey. It may get extra dark too, because the silver tells your cells to get tan. Eyes and internal organs can accumulate extra silver too. Once the silver is in, there's no way to get it back out. You have a permanent blue tan!

Silver is used in some drugs. Bandages soaked in a drug containing silver is used for burns and wounds. Silver nitrate is one way of treating corns and warts. It leaves a black stain until that layer of skin rubs off. The permanent stain silver leaves is sometimes put to good use. Silver nitrate is sometimes put on dollar bills. People who handle the bills (such as bank robbers!) will get black stains on their fingers that last

long enough for them to be identified. Occasionally a bank teller who has to handle the bills will end up with black spots on her fingers from the silver. Oops!

Because it's not a drug or food, the FDA can not enforce any safety standards. A few decent Web sites sell it along with their legitimate medicines, and lots of smaller sites offer many versions at many prices. Some of the products on the market recommend taking 10 times the amount that EPA considers a safe dose!

The unfortunate part of this is that for all the advertising of colloidal silver, there is no evidence that it really does any good. In certain situations silver does kill bacteria. But there is no proof at all that it will kill any inside you. And FDA can not force the sellers to stop, or force them to prove the wild claims they make are true.

The good side of the story is that, while you can lose money buying the stuff, you would have to take an awful lot to do other damage. There's not much evidence that it can get into the brain or nerves the way mercury or lead can. But taking dissolved or colloidal silver can be anything from a waste of money to a major headache - literally. Besides headaches, too much silver can damage kidneys and upset stomachs. Exactly how or why silver does this is not clear, but the cases are very rare.

And luckily we don't absorb much at all through skin contact. So you can go ahead and wear a silver ring or earrings. You're not likely to turn blue or get black spots from that. But don't fall for the fantastic claims of colloidal silver sellers. They're not worth their weight in paper, much less silver or gold.

Here's a cool summer salad, perfect for a hot summer evening. Use leftover chicken or get a rotisserie chicken from the grocery. Serve with whole grain bread and lemonade! Yum!

Kiwi-Lime Chicken Salad

1 ½ C diced cooked chicken	2 C cooked brown rice
2 Tbsp canola or sunflower oil	1 ½ Tbsp lime juice
1 tsp lemon juice	½ tsp honey

1/4 tsp dry mustard

Dash of turmeric (optional but good)

1 kiwi, peeled and sliced

1 bag ready to eat spinach leaves

Place chicken and rice in large bowl. Combine oil, juices, honey, mustard and turmeric in small jar with lid and shake to mix well. Pour over chicken and rice and toss until well coated. Add sliced kiwi and toss gently. Chill if desired until serving time. Put spinach in serving bowl or on individual plates, top with chicken salad and enjoy. Serves 6.

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