

Man Diagnosed with Rare Condition after Eating Pepper

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Category : Health

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **manifestation** / ˌmæn ə fəˈsteɪ ʃən / (n) – a sign or symptom of a condition
Example: Speech difficulty is one of the **manifestations** of stroke.
- 2. **constrict** / kənˈstrikt / (v) – to cause something to compress or tighten
Example: I couldn’t breathe; I could feel my chest **constricting**.
- 3. **ointment** / ˈɔɪnt mənt / (n) – a substance applied to the skin for medicinal purposes
Example: My doctor asked me to apply **ointment** on my skin to reduce the itchiness.
- 4. **illustrate** / ˈɪ ə streɪt, ɪˈlʌs treɪt / (v) – to show something
Example: The recent outbreak **illustrates** the need for more effective ways to fight dengue.
- 5. **for a living** / fər ɛɪ ˈlɪv ɪŋ / (idiom) – done to make enough money to support oneself
Example: She teaches high school students **for a living**.

Article

Read the text below.

A 34-year-old man has suffered from a rare health condition after consuming a Carolina Reaper pepper in a chili-eating contest.

Days after the contest, the man developed “thunderclap” headaches, which are characterized by strong and sudden headaches. The man then went to the hospital for treatment and learned that the headaches were **manifestations** of a condition called reversible cerebral vasoconstriction syndrome [rɪˈvɜr sə bəl səˈri brəl ˌvæs oʊ kənˈstrikt ʃən ˈsɪn droʊm] (RCVS). This condition occurs when blood vessels **constrict**.

All peppers, including the Carolina Reaper pepper, contain capsaicin / kəpˈseɪ ə sɪn /. It is a substance that gives pepper its hot flavor and is sometimes used in medical **ointments**. Taking this substance in large quantities has been linked to blood vessel constriction, which can result in a heart attack. However, the 34-year-old man’s case is the first to **illustrate** that blood vessel constriction can also happen in the brain upon consuming capsaicin.

According to experts, RCVS can be treated through medical observation and removal of the capsaicin from the body.

Upon learning about the man’s case, a farmer who grows and sells Carolina Reaper pepper **for a living** argued that people should not be afraid of eating this type of pepper. He stated that this pepper is safe for consumption as long as it is not eaten raw. The farmer recommends cooking it first and adding it to dishes like curry.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- What do you think are the health risks associated with eating contests (e.g. hotdog-eating contests, pizza-eating contests)?

- Would you be willing to join eating contests despite the health risks? Why or why not?

Discussion B

- Why is it important to be aware of food safety practices?

- Do you think that you have enough knowledge when it comes to food safety? Explain.