

# Abbott withdraws Meridia diet pill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Abbott Laboratories said Friday it will withdraw its diet pill Meridia in the U.S. and Canada, after coming under pressure from health regulators who say the drug increases the risk of heart attacks and stroke in patients with a history of heart disease.

Companies have struggled for decades to develop drugs that help people lose weight without dangerous side effects. The withdrawal of Meridia leaves just one prescription drug on the market for long-term weight loss — Roche's Xenical, which is not widely used. Several other generic drugs are approved for short-term weight loss, including phentermine.

Food and Drug Administra-

tion scientists said they requested the withdrawal because Meridia's risks were not outweighed by "the very modest weight loss that people achieve on this drug." On average, patients lost five pounds with the drug.

Physicians are advised to stop prescribing Meridia to their patients and patients should stop taking this medication," Dr. John Jenkins, the FDA's director for new drugs, said in a statement.

Meridia is not widely used in the U.S., with a steep decline in prescriptions in recent years. About 100,000 patients use the drug in the U.S., according to the FDA. Eighty percent of users are middle-aged women.

Earlier in the day, national regulator Health Canada

announced that Abbott would voluntarily pull the drug from the market there. Meridia has been available in both countries for more than a decade.

European regulators pulled the product off the market in January after a study showed that patients with heart disease had an 11 percent chance of heart attacks or stroke while taking the drug compared with a 10 percent risk for those not taking it. Heart disease is relatively common among obese patients.

Regulators in the U.S. and Canada said they based their decisions on the same data.

Weight loss drugs have long been plagued by negative side effects — particularly heart problems. In the same year Meridia was approved, Wyeth's

diet drug combination, fen-phen, was pulled off the market because of links to heart-valve damage and lung problems. In 2004, the FDA banned the weight loss supplement ephedra because of heart attack risks.

Outside medical experts repeatedly have recommended that the FDA require drugmakers to study the effect weight loss drugs have on the heart before they are released to market — as the agency requires for some other drug types.

Jenkins said the agency is considering new requirements for weight loss drugs, "but we do not currently have a stated policy."



**SWEET REWARD** — Walmart associate Cherry Benson had the honor of throwing a pie in the face of store manager Justin Sperry after the associates met a company goal. (SDN Staff Photo by Jeff West)

## SDN COLUMN by Roy McQueen

The feller on Deep Creek says, "God helps those who help themselves and the government seems always to want to help the others."

In the current issue of Texas Monthly, there is a law firm advertisement featuring two individuals who would look familiar to most people in Scurry County.

On the right is Jerry Jones, owner of America's Team — the Dallas Cowboys. At left is Levi Glen McCathern II, the attorney for Jerry Jones.

Levi looks a little different than he did when he graduated from Snyder High School in 1987 — but inside his heart remains the same. "I still love Snyder."

Levi, for the fifth time since 2003, has been named to the *Texas Super Lawyers* list. He is board certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in civil trial law and labor and employment law, a double certification held by only 26 of the 86,000 attorneys in the state.

Growing up in Snyder, he was known as "Lee." His father, Glen McCathern was director of education at Colonial Hill Baptist Church, and his mother, Jan, was a speech teacher at Western Texas College. Glen just last month retired after serving the Coulter Road Baptist Church in Amarillo. And last month, Jan was on a mission trip to China, teaching at the International School.

Levi's brother, Curtis, is seven years younger and now lives in Pittsburgh, Pa., where he has found his own success writing market software for trading companies in Chicago.

In high school, Levi was active in drama, band, choir and football. He entered Baylor University in the fall of 1987 with plans to become a minister. And during his years in Waco, Levi was pastor of the First Baptist Church in nearby Travis.

Encouraged by the dean of the law school, Levi applied and was accepted at Baylor, earning his law degree in 1993. That fall he became an associate with the law firm of Godwin and Carlton, and in less than five years, he was named the youngest shareholder in the firm's history.

Twelve years ago, Levi founded McCathern Wallington Moody, currently known as McCathern Moody, a firm with 37 employees — including 18 licensed attorneys.

It was during his second year as a practicing attorney that Levi met another member of the law firm named Jerry Jones Jr. "We got to be friends and after a couple of years I started to handle some smaller cases for the Jones family,"

Levi was serving as "local counsel" for a Washington, D.C. law firm that was representing Jones and the Dallas Cowboys. "The case went badly, very badly. The only issue was whether the Cowboys owed \$200 or \$600 million. Jerry Jones asked if I could correct it and I guaranteed him that I could. We ended up with zero liability and ended up getting a couple of million. From then on I became his go-to lawyer."

While Jones and the Cowboys are large clients, they only represent about 10 percent of the firm's business. This month Levi was involved in a trial in Huntsville that was attracting wide-spread media attention as the city of Huntsville was suing the chamber of commerce for alleged misuse of the city's hotel occupancy tax.

Levi remains involved in litigation concerning the collapse of the Cowboys' training facility and there are about 20 cases involving default on leases of boxes in the Cowboys' new stadium in Arlington. The largest is against a group of dentists in the Metroplex over a 20-year lease valued at \$42 million.

And Levi successfully defended for the Cowboys the ownership of the phrase, "America's Team."

Levi says his work days are long, but there are benefits such as getting to attend all of the Cowboys' games. He also is invited by the Jones family to attend the Super Bowl.

He still considers himself a minister, and was invited to officiate at the wedding in Italy of Jerry Jones Jr. where the best men were Jerry Sr. and a brother, Steven Jones. He is conducting another wedding this month.

Levi has never practiced in Scurry County, but does have one case pending in the 132<sup>nd</sup> District Court. "The case was originally filed in Lubbock, but everything happened in Snyder," he explained.

In 2004, Levi married a family law attorney, Ashlea, who is now a stay-at-home mom. Their children are four-year-old Ryan and two-year-old Madison. Levi also has a 13-year-old son, Noah. The McCathern family is active in the Highland Park United Methodist Church.

"I don't want this to sound comey," Levi said, "But I think about Snyder every single day. Everybody I associate with knows I'm from Snyder, Texas. My work is here, but I wish I could raise my kids in an environment like Snyder."

"Growing up in Snyder affects your entire life, a group of friends who still stay in touch and the commonality of Snyder make you who you are."



Levi McCathern and Jerry Jones

### What's **SDN** in Scurry County

**Farmers' Market**  
The Snyder Farmers' Market will be held from 7 a.m. to noon every Saturday on the west side of the square. Fresh vegetables and other handcrafted items will be sold. For more information, call 207-7358.

**JHCC**  
In Harmony Community Club will be accepting donations of clean clothes, working appliances and home goods for upcoming community service projects from 2-4 p.m. Saturday at 600 30th Street (30th and Ave. F, Crosswalk Ministries Bldg.) For more information, call 232-0543.

**Pumpkin Patch**  
The Pumpkin Patch, sponsored by ClearStar Athletics, opens at 6 p.m. Saturday for family night next to Wash Happen! on East 37th Street. Day fall pumpkins and participate in fun games to include a bounce house, pony rides, hay rides, refreshments and more. Held every Saturday in October, admission is \$2.

**Friend day**  
Victory Baptist Church will have "Friend Day" at 10-45 a.m. Sunday. A luncheon will follow the service in the fellowship hall.

**Retired teachers' luncheon**  
Scurry County Retired Teachers Association will meet at noon Monday at The Shack, Paula Hatfield will present a program on the Scurry County Historical commission.

**What's Up guidelines**  
Items for What's Up will be published twice at no charge, the day before and the day of the event. Events or activities requiring additional publicity will be referred to the advertising department where a special non-profit rate is available.

### LOTTO TEXAS LOTTERY

**Friday's Lottery Numbers**

Mega Millions  
24-29-37-48-50 MB: 19  
Megaplier: 4

Cash Five  
15-19-25-28-32

Pick 3 Day: 6-0-7  
Sum it up: 13

Pick 3 Night: 7-9-3  
Sum it up: 19

Daily 4 Day: 0-2-2-4  
Sum it up: 8

Daily 4 Night: 6-3-9-2  
Sum it up: 19

### Today's Weather

#### Local 3-Day Forecast

Sun 10/10	Mon 10/11	Tue 10/12
86/57	78/55	80/54
Sunshine and some clouds. Warm. High 86F. Winds SSW at 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a stray thunderstorm.	Sunshine. Highs in the low 80s and lows in the mid 50s.
Sunrise 7:44 AM Sunset 7:17 PM	Sunrise 7:45 AM Sunset 7:16 PM	Sunrise 7:46 AM Sunset 7:14 PM

4500 College Avenue  
S73-9305

High Friday, 81 degrees  
Low Friday, 51 degrees  
7 a.m. reading Saturday, 52 degrees  
2010 days of sunshine: 271 of 281  
Precipitation: None  
2010 precipitation: 28.12 inches

#### Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	84	62	sunny	El Paso	83	58	pt sunny	McKean	83	51	mt sunny
Amarillo	76	47	pt sunny	Fort Stockton	90	58	mt sunny	Raymondville	91	67	mt sunny
Austin	86	64	sunny	Gainesville	86	59	sunny	Rosenberg	87	64	sunny
Beaumont	88	62	sunny	Greenville	87	58	sunny	San Antonio	88	66	sunny
Brownsville	90	69	mt sunny	Houston	86	64	sunny	San Marcos	87	63	sunny
Brownwood	89	61	sunny	Kingville	91	66	sunny	Sulphur Springs	89	61	sunny
Corpus Christi	88	69	sunny	Livington	89	59	sunny	Sweetwater	87	59	mt sunny
Coranaca	86	60	sunny	Longview	89	59	sunny	Tyler	88	59	sunny
Dallas	87	62	sunny	Lubbock	83	49	pt sunny	Weatherford	86	60	sunny
Del Rio	89	63	sunny	Lufkin	89	60	sunny	Wolffs Falls	87	58	mt sunny

#### National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	88	53	sunny	Houston	86	64	sunny	Phoenix	89	65	sunny
Boston	65	46	sunny	Los Angeles	83	63	sunny	San Francisco	75	62	pt sunny
Chicago	84	56	pt sunny	Miami	86	70	sunny	Seattle	63	48	rain
Dallas	87	62	sunny	Minneapolis	81	58	pt sunny	St. Louis	88	61	pt sunny
Denver	62	42	rain	New York	68	56	sunny	Washington, DC	78	61	sunny

#### Moon Phases

#### UV Index

Sun 10/10	Mon 10/11	Tue 10/12
7	7	7
High	High	High

The UV index is measured on a 2-11 number scale, with a higher UV index showing the need for greater skin protection.