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resistance if the agents are given to thousands of IBS patients.

In addition, there is a greater focus on the use of antidepressants to treat IBS in the new guidelines.

For example, “there is a stronger recommendation that tricyclic antidepressants, used in low doses before people go to sleep at night, are an effective medicine for irritable bowel syndrome,” Dr. Schoenfeld said.

The agents can reduce bloating and discomfort by altering brain-gut signaling about motility and distention. He added that constipation, a side effect of tricyclic

The likelihood of a person who has IBS symptoms and no warning signs having some other organic diagnosis is no greater than in the general population.

antidepressants, is actually beneficial in this population.

The authors of the guidelines also found enough evidence to support SSRIs for symptom improvement. “I want to emphasize that this does not appear to be related to depression,” Dr. Talley said. “This appears to be related to effects of these drugs either in the brain or the gut, but probably both places.”

Some treatment recommendations in the guidelines are not expected to change, including the use of loperamide (Imodium) or alosetron (Lotronex).

The new recommendation for serologic celiac disease testing is for a subset of IBS patients.

“We made a much stronger recommendation for testing for celiac disease in patients with diarrhea-predominant or mixed IBS,” Dr. Chey said. “We actually came out and said serologic screening for celiac disease should be pursued.”

Evidence of benefit from probiotics is also addressed. “Every one of my patients with IBS asked about probiotics,” Dr. Talley said.

“The guidelines will basically say that probiotics are efficacious, but the evidence supporting this is not as good as we would like,” he stated. The large number of probiotic products with varying degrees of efficacy precluded a stronger recommendation.

“Probiotics seem to be relatively safe as well, based on the data we have,” Dr. Talley said. “So I’m not uncomfortable with recommending a probiotic to my patients.”

He added, however, that some people are nonresponders.

In addition, recent evidence that indicates peppermint oil improves IBS symptoms will be in the update.

Dr. Schoenfeld disclosed that he is a consultant to, and is on the advisory committee for, Salix Pharmaceuticals Ltd., which markets Xifaxan.

Dr. Talley is also a consultant for Salix and a variety of other pharmaceutical companies, and receives financial support from several firms.

Dr. Chey reported no relevant financial disclosures for his presentation. ■



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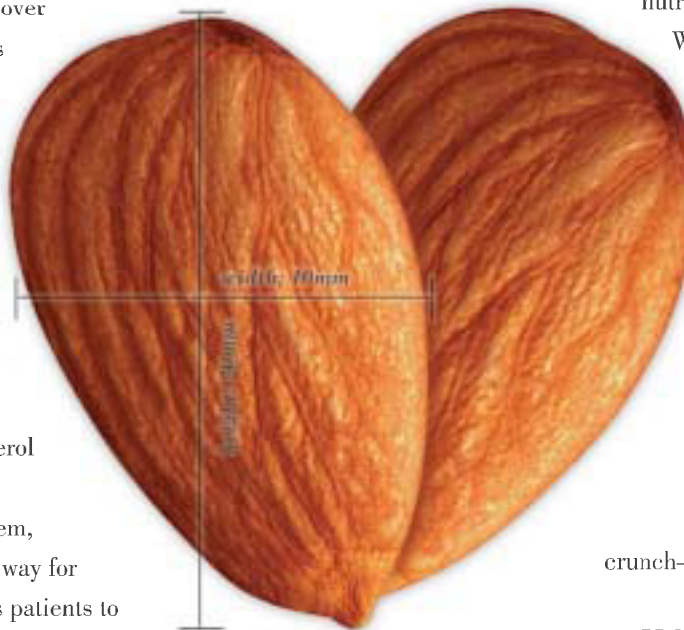
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{ Fig. 1a: *Prunus dulcis* }
weight: 1/23 oz



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