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Catl BOSTON - Wait. Clean your plate. Mom's advice is si correct: You really should e tion: chapel at 846-

your carrots. The release of a big study of ing doubt on the seemingly aw some powers of beta carotene led to some understandable con sion. The research found that i only did mega-doses of this v min found in carrots fail to prot smokers from lung cancer, it act ally seemed to increase the risk.

Thursday, April 14.19

Study questions

health benefits

of vitamins, uses to curb cancer

Associated Press

At DeLuca's Market Boston's Beacon Hill, produ manager Paul Sousa was as puz zled as anyone.

"This is something that's been good for people for so long. Then they change their story in mid-stream. It's hard to understand, he said.

Not even the people who conducted the 10-year, \$43 mil lion study are sure what to make of it. But one thing seems clear. Carrots, broccoli and other food rich in beta carotene are good for you.

And while vitamin pills are no proven to be harmful, the study published in Wednesday's New England Journal does nothing a support the exuberant claim made about them, either.

"This is very specific to pills All of the studies that preceded this that looked at foods showed no suggestion of harm," said Kara Smigel, a dietician and spokeswoman for the National Cancer Institute.

"We are worried about head-lines that say, 'Carrots Are Bad for " she said. You,'

In recent years, though, many people have turned to vitamin pills to boost their daily intake o beta carotene and other nutrient found in much smaller levels in a healthy diet.

The latest study - though not conclusive proof of harm - i certainly noteworthy. It is the first in a well-fed Western country to look at the long-term effects of high doses of beta carotene. In this project, 29,133 older male smokers who lived in Finland took beta carotene capsules, vita-min E or dummy pills for five to eight years.

When it was done, the beta carotene users had 18 percent more lung cancer than did the others.

It is possible that the finding was a statistical fluke, even though the odds of this were calculated to be one in 100. Furthermore, it

The Associated Press

Economy shows healthy signs as consumer prices, sales rise

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Consumer prices rose moderately last month and Americans spent less than expected at stores, easing fears of spiraling inflation and an overheating economy. Helped by the smallest increase in health care costs

in a decade, the Consumer Price Index increased 0.3 percent in March — matching February's rise, the Labor Department said Wednesday.

The Commerce Department reported that retail sales were up 0.4 percent last month, a figure econo-mists said is a sign of healthy but not worrisome growth.

Hours after the report, financial markets did not seem encouraged. Stock prices were lower in early af-ternoon trading after bonds failed to hang on to initial gains.

Inflation has been mild for more than three years, the best stretch in three decades. The cost of living was up 2.7 percent last year, following a 2.9 percent rise in 1992 and 3.1 percent in 1991

But recent surging economic growth has sparked inflation fears and led the Federal Reserve to increase short-term interest rates.

The Labor Department said increases in clothing prices and housing costs — primarily rent — ac-counted for about half of March's CPI upturn, which

was generally in line with economists' predictions. Before February's 0.3 percent rise, the index had been unchanged in January for the first time in more than four years

The annual inflation rate was up 2.5 percent for the first quarter of 1994, compared to 2.7 percent for the same period in 1993. When volatile food and energy costs are excluded, the index still rose 0.3 per-cent for March and just 2.9 percent from a year ago.

The latest figures were on top of the government's reassuring report Tuesday that wholesale prices increased 0.2 percent in March and at a 3.9 percent annual rate for the first quarter of 1994

Still, many economists expect the Federal Reserve to bump short-term rates up another quarter percentage point this spring, possibly on May 17 when its policy-making Open Market Committee meets. The central bank in the last two months nudged shortterm interest rates from 3 percent to 3.5 percent.

The Commerce Department said retail sales in March totaled a seasonally adjusted \$182.3 billion, up from a revised \$181.5 billion a month earlier.

Veterinarian Tom Granger and assistant Kathy acupuncture treatment in Lumberton, Texas. Somers calm Bob the dachshund during an Granger is certified to perform the procedure.

Chemicals

Continued from page 1

"Once again tobacco industry representatives have not only withheld information, but they have misrepresented the truth," Waxman said.

Spears didn't return a phone call seeking comment.

Tobacco is the biggest ingredient in cigarettes, and scientists have shown that tobacco itself and chemicals in cigarette smoke are lethal.

The government estimates that 400,000 Americans die from ciga-

rettes every year.

There is growing uproar over a federal law that makes companies list for the government the more than 700 additives that go into different brands. The law forces that list to be kept secret under penalty of jail.

The list released Wednesday contained 599 additives, those used by domestic cigarette companies. Foreign companies use an additional 100 chemicals, which remain secret.

Among the more common additives: chocolate, wine and coconut oil.

Government officials have said

13 cigarette additives aren't al-lowed in food. Domestic cigarettes contain only eight of those, and Reynolds contended they're not harmful in the trace amounts used. Among them:

•Methoprene, an insecticide

•Ammonia

•Ethyl furoate which causes liver damage

That's irrelevant, FDA's O'Hara "If it's approved for use in said. food, that means there's been the appropriate testing that shows it can be safely digested. That doesn't speak one way or the other to the safety of something."

could turn out that the results would be different in nonsmokers, or that somewhat lower doses could have an effect on other

types of cancer. "When the study began, we wanted nothing more than to prevent cancer. It's a good example of the idea that science is not always highly predictable," said the cancer institute's Dr. Demetrius Albanes,

"Does this mean people should "a chad Dr stop taking vitamins?" asked Dr. Charles Hennekens of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. "It does not mean they should stop, but the previous data did not mean they should have started."

