

## Aspirin May Treat Types Of Colon Cancer

NEW YORK (AP) — Aspirin, one of the world's oldest and cheapest drugs, has shown remarkable promise in treating colon cancer in people with mutations in a gene that's thought to play a role in the disease.

Among patients with the mutations, those who regularly took aspirin lived longer than those who didn't, a major study found. Five years after their cancers were diagnosed, 97 percent of the aspirin users were still alive versus 74 percent of those not taking the drug.

Aspirin seemed to make no difference in patients who did not have the mutations.

This sort of study can't prove that aspirin caused the better survival, and doctors say more research must confirm the findings before aspirin can be recommended more widely. The study wasn't designed to test aspirin; people were taking it on their own for various reasons.

Still, the results suggest that this simple medicine might be the cheapest gene-targeting therapy ever found for cancer. About one-sixth of all colon cancer patients have the mutated gene and might be helped by aspirin. And aspirin costs just pennies a day.

## Suit Cites Mortgage Fraud At Countrywide

NEW YORK (AP) — The latest federal lawsuit over alleged mortgage fraud paints an unflattering picture of a doomed lender: Executives at Countrywide Financial urged workers to churn out loans, accepted fudged applications and tried to hide ballooning defaults.

The suit, filed Wednesday by the top federal prosecutor in Manhattan, also underscored how Bank of America's purchase of Countrywide in July 2008, just before the financial crisis, backfired severely.

The prosecutor, Preet Bharara, said he was seeking more than \$1 billion, but the suit could ultimately recover much more in damages. "This lawsuit should send another clear message that reckless lending practices will not be tolerated," Bharara said in a statement. He described Countrywide's practices as "spectacularly brazen in scope."

He also charged that Bank of America has resisted buying back soured mortgages from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which bought loans from Countrywide.

## Gaza Militants Blast Southern Israel

JERUSALEM (AP) — Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip fired dozens of rockets and mortar shells into southern Israel on Wednesday in the heaviest bombardment on the area in months, drawing ominous Israeli threats of retaliation and dangers of escalation.

The violence came a day after a landmark visit to Gaza by the emir of Qatar. Israeli officials suggested the visit, the first by a head of state to the Hamas-ruled territory, emboldened the militant group.

The rocket fire began shortly after the emir left Gaza late Tuesday and continued through the night. Israeli officials said more than 80 projectiles were fired, and Hamas claimed responsibility for many of the attacks.

# Obama, Romney Both Picking Up Pace

BY BEN FELLER

AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Locked in a stubbornly tight race, President Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney are demonstrating the urgency of the campaign's final stretch, with the incumbent alone set to cover 5,300 miles in the busiest single day of his re-election bid. Both men claimed a growing edge even as voters showed little give.

From Colorado to Iowa to ever-important Ohio, bigger crowds and late October scenery offered the feel of a campaign starting to finally crackle. Obama centered on a closing theme that voters simply cannot trust Romney, while the challenger warned of the bleak times that four more Obama years would bring.

At the majestic Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Colorado late Tuesday, Romney said Obama's promise of more of the same is "why he's slipping and it's why we're gaining."

He cast the race as moving his way during a rally of up to 10,000 at the amphitheater, a stunning setting cut into mountain rocks outside Denver. Blue lights and the Romney "R" logo lit the rocks rising on either side of the venue, and the crowd wore colored T-shirts that, viewed from afar, formed the Colorado state flag.

Romney wasn't staying in Colorado long. With just two weeks left and all three of their debates behind them, the candidates turned to travel — a lot of it.

Their mission remains to sway the small pool of undecided voters, but their increasing emphasis is to implore their millions of supporters to vote, particularly in the battleground states that allow early ballots to be cast.

Setting up for a frenetic finish,

both campaigns sought to show they had enthusiasm and organization on their side.

"We have the ball, we have the lead," Obama campaign strategist David Axelrod insisted.

Obama was to campaign nearly around the clock Wednesday.

His day was taking him from Washington to Iowa, Colorado, California and Nevada, and then overnight to Florida. Not stopping to sleep in a hotel was meant to signal spirit and drive — although, with a comfortable suite on Air Force One, Obama was hardly crashing out in the coach section for his red-eye flight.

It was the first time Obama was spending the night on his plane for a domestic trip, but far from unprecedented for an incumbent scrambling to keep his job.

Across the miles, Obama was holding rallies from morning to night, appearing on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and calling some voters from the plane. It is the first half of a two-day trip that will see him going to Florida, Virginia and Ohio on Thursday, with a stop sandwiched in for him to cast his vote in Chicago.

Romney, too, is picking up the pace.

He is campaigning Wednesday in Reno, Nev., and Cedar Rapids, Iowa, before a three-stop swing in Ohio on Thursday.

"His is a status quo candidacy,"

Romney said of Obama as he teamed with running mate Paul Ryan in Henderson, Nev., on Tuesday. Thousands gathered at Red Rocks to hear him, although the sound system made him sound distant.

A swell of public polling showed an up-for-grabs race.

The Obama campaign had clearly heard the complaint that Obama, after more than a year of speeches, had failed to articulate his second-term vision. Obama's team produced a 20-page booklet outlining his proposals and promised to distribute millions of copies. Obama himself held it up at two speeches.

In the closing phase, Obama is trying to capitalize on polls that show voters see the president as more trustworthy than Romney. The president has spiced his rhetoric with humor to temper his underlying charge — that Romney is lying about what he would do as president.

"We joke about Gov. Romney being all over the map, but it speaks to something important — it speaks of trust," Obama said in Dayton, Ohio. "Trust matters. You want to know that the person who's applying to be your president and commander in chief is trustworthy, that he means what he says."

With Obama holding an edge in the uncontested states, Romney must win more of the battlegrounds to reach the minimum 270 electoral votes for the presidency. Those states are Nevada, Colorado, Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida and New Hampshire.

All of them will be drawing enormous personal attention from Romney and Obama, their wives, their running mates and other surrogates through Nov. 6.

In those states, Romney and Obama have both focused on criti-

cal demographics — particularly female voters. Polls show more women backing Romney in recent weeks. But Romney could face some trouble over comments from Indiana Republican Senate candidate Richard Mourdock, who in a Tuesday night debate said that when a woman is impregnated during a rape, "it's something God intended."

Romney's campaign said late Tuesday that he "disagrees" with Mourdock but wouldn't say whether the campaign would ask him to stop airing a TV ad that Romney cut for Mourdock earlier this week.

Two months ago, embattled Missouri GOP Senate candidate Rep. Todd Akin said during a TV interview that women's bodies have ways of preventing pregnancy in cases of what he called "legitimate rape."

Since his comment, Akin has apologized repeatedly but has refused to leave the race despite calls to do so by leaders of his own party, including Romney.

From the Romney campaign, aides to Ryan were casting his speech Wednesday at Cleveland State University as a significant pitch.

He was to argue that Americans stuck in poverty cannot afford four more years like the past four. Ryan also planned to tell voters that Romney offers a better pathway for low-income Americans to improve their lives through opportunity and upward mobility, including school choice and public-private partnerships.

## Parents: Slain NJ Girl Treated Like 'Trash'

CLAYTON, N.J. (AP) — The mother of a 12-year-old New Jersey girl who was strangled and dumped in a recycling bin said Wednesday that the two teenage brothers accused of killing her had treated her daughter "like a piece of trash."

Authorities found Autumn Pasquale's body Monday night while acting on a tip from the boys' mother, who was alarmed by something she read on one of their Facebook pages, authorities said.

The arrests came Tuesday after police searched the boys' home and found the bike the girl had been riding and other possessions she had with her when she disappeared over the weekend.

In their first interview since Autumn's body was found in a bin next to the boys' home, her parents, Jennifer Cornwell and Anthony Pasquale, talked about how strong their daughter was and the horrible ending to her life.

Pasquale said he knew the family of the boys arrested in the death.

The parents said they had been overwhelmed by the support from the community and the donations they have received, and knew their daughter would want them to stay strong.

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