

***Ask the School Nurse:*****What should I do about embarrassing stretch marks?**

by **Susan Martin, R.N.**  
Faculty Contributor

*Is there any way to get rid of stretch marks?*

—*The Zebra*

Sigh—many people have this problem, so I am glad you asked. Both men and women can have stretch marks on several areas of their bodies including the abdominal area (stomach), thighs, hips, breasts, upper arms, or lower back.

They are caused by rapid weight loss or gain and start off as reddish or purplish in color and then become glossy and appear streaked in silver or white. It occurs in the dermis (the elastic middle layer of skin that allows it to retain its shape). When it is constantly stretched, it can break down and leave behind these stretch marks. (Research from Medicine.net)

There are several different means of preventing more stretch marks. Drink plenty of water, as dehydration can make the skin less elastic and more prone to stretching. Limit caffeine intake (coffee, tea, carbonated drinks) and drink as much water as you do liquids with caffeine.

You can also eat foods that promote skin health such as foods rich in zinc (nuts and fish), foods high in Vitamins A and C (carrots, citrus fruits, and milk) and protein-rich foods (such as eggs).

Methods for removal include surgical methods (dermabrasion, chemical peels, and laser surgery), and lotions and creams sold over the counter. While you are young, this is an easier problem to tackle, so start doing what you can to lessen the likelihood of de-

veloping more and come see the doctor at the Clinic if you want to see about options for removal. Best wishes—and see me about helpful websites.

*How much coffee can a person (who has an ulcer or who has a big risk of having one) consume per week?*

—*Cappuccino Lover*

In my research (heartburn.about.com), I found that ulcer diets are very individual, but that certain foods are more apt to bother those who are

experiencing gastro-intestinal problems. Diets for patients with ulcers are developed to accomplish three things: restrict or avoid foods that may irritate the digestive system, reduce excessive acid production, and prevent unpleasant side effects such as heartburn.

Foods that are most often recommended to avoid are coffee, tea, carbonated beverages, citrus fruits, tomato based products, spicy foods, foods high in fat, and chocolate. It is also recommended that alcohol and smoking should be

avoided.

Dairy products, like the milk in cappuccino are generally allowed for those with ulcers. So, I would recommend that you avoid the foods mentioned above.

When you are feeling better, reintroduce a cappuccino and see how you tolerate it. If it doesn't bother you, try to avoid having it every day, but enjoy it if you are able! I have further information available for you if you would like to come to the Clinic. Take care and good luck!

***What was the deal with the Big Bed?***

by **Nacole Potts**  
Contributor

February 9-13 was Sexual Responsibility week. BC's Peer Health Advocate Team used a Big Bed social experiment as a unique way to advocate communication between bed-mates..

"We wanted to take a more indirect approach to raising awareness for sexual responsibility, something different from just 'Hey! Here are some free condoms,'" said Lauren Wise, SGA representative for P.H.A.T. Each signature on the bed symbolized partners in one's sexual history.

The bed was located on the second floor of Coltrane with markers attached to it for students to sign.

Each signature represented a different partner in someone's sexual history, and the students that signed the bed without taking into consideration the other signatures (partners) symbolize the ignorance some have toward their partners' history and the consequences that ignorance poses.



Visitors to Coltrane Commons last week could have chosen to take a nap ... if they dared.

"The purpose of the big bed is to show people that when you sleep with your significant other you're also sleeping with all the people they slept with up to 10 years prior. The reason being is that it can take that long for some STD's to show up," Wise said.

Communication and regular STD testing are vital. Thorough and honest communication can prevent the spread of STDs, promoting a truly healthy relationship.

It's important to know not

only who your partner has slept with before, but also his or her stance on contraception and the last time he or she was tested. If you and your partner would like to be tested for STDs or find out more information about contraceptives, this can be done through the Transylvania County Health Department (884-3135). All services are confidential. Women can be tested for free. Men are tested for free if they are having symptoms or have been exposed to a particular STD.