

Get Medical Care Before Conception

Couples planning a baby should get in shape for pregnancy before they actually conceive the child, according to Dr. Robert C. Cefalo, chief of the division of maternal and fetal medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine.

"We are interested in the very best outcome of pregnancy," Cefalo said. "At the time of conception we believe the couple should be in optimal physical shape and emotionally ready for parenthood."

Cefalo urged couples to talk with health professionals about their concerns before they actually conceive a child. "Preconceptional counseling provides couples with a realistic look at their health status, the risks involved in a prospective pregnancy and an adequate knowledge base upon which an informed decision can be made about a particular risk."

He said medical advances in obstetrical and neonatal care have brought about a rapid decline in the death rate for pregnant women and their babies over the past 30 years.

"We believe that in order to further decrease these rates and increase the quality of reproduction," Cefalo said, "we must identify the 'at risk' conditions that may lead to the complicated pregnancy and the complicated outcome."

"Successful reproduction doesn't just start with fertilization and conception," he continued. "What we are trying to do is to set optimum health standards that may directly or indirectly affect the ovum

or the sperm or the interaction of the two." Cefalo said 5 percent of the births each year in the United States involve a malformed child and half of those involve a serious, life-threatening situation. He said adverse agents can have a wide variety of effects on the sperm, ovum or fetus including sterility, minor malformations, major birth defects or no effect at all.

"We know that at various stages of development the degree of sensitivity to an adverse agent increases," Cefalo said, adding that the period of greatest sensitivity appears to be during the first 17-56 days of a woman's pregnancy.

He said many patients don't know they are pregnant or don't seek medical help until after this period has passed. "We now realize how important it is for patients to come in before and get advice or to come in very, very early in pregnancy."

"The number one cause of preventable congenital defects in the United States is alcohol," Cefalo said. He indicated that 30 percent of patients who drink four to six glasses or more of alcohol per day may produce a baby

that has fetal alcohol syndrome including mental retardation, growth retardation and other birth defects.

The greatest risk is during the first three months of pregnancy, Cefalo said, but alcohol in excess can have negative effects throughout pregnancy. He indicated that even if a woman alcoholic is not identified until the third trimester, her chances of an underweight baby can be reduced from 45 percent to 8 percent if she can be helped to cut down on her drinking.

"If we can do something in the third trimester to affect outcome," Cefalo said, "look how much we could do by pre-identifying, supporting and helping the patient cut down in the first trimester, or even better, prior to pregnancy."

Cefalo said caffeine does not appear to change chromosomes although it may enhance the adverse effects of other drugs. He warned prospective parents that tea, soft drinks and over-the-counter drugs also contain caffeine. "Focus on caffeine, don't just think about coffee," he advised.

"There is every reason to stop smoking prior to pregnancy or in early pregnancy," Cefalo said. He added that babies born to women who smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day have a lower body weight, shortened body length and smaller head circumference than babies born to non-smokers.

Dr. William Droegemueller, chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology, discusses the effects of various contraceptive methods used prior to becoming pregnant. He said women who use birth control pills generally have a delay in becoming pregnant after they stop taking the pill. "It's temporary and women do not become permanently

(Continued on Page 4)



Ms. Elaine Barbour

Engineering Students Work At Bells Labs

"This summer at Bell Labs has given me a totally different perspective," said Elaine Barbour, a 19 year old Duke University sophomore. "Having the chance to experience the technical world, to learn from the experts, to decide what I want to do professionally will help me in the future."

That's how Barbour summed up her second summer at Bell Labs computer center in Murray Hill, N.J. She is one of 72 students who participated this summer in the Bell Labs Engineering Scholarship Program. Designed to encourage academically qualified and women to become engineers or computer scientists, the program includes full scholarships as well summer employment at a Bell Labs location. Students involved in the program this year are

working primarily in four key Information Age technologies—microelectronics, software, lightwave, and digital communications. Candidates are selected on the basis of scholastic aptitude and performance, rank in

class, and strength of their high school curriculum as well as letters of recommendation. Questions and requests for information can be directed to Gary Richenaker, Bell Labs, 150 JFK Parkway, Short Hills, N.J. 07078.

Planning Session at Antioch

The One Day District 7 Group 2 will have its Planning Session at Antioch Baptist Church, 2 miles from Oxford Central Orphanage, November 13 at 10 a.m. Plans will be made for the April meeting.

HELP!

The Planning Committee of the Hillside High School Class of 1943, in preparing for its 40th Class Reunion on July 2-3, 1983, needs to get information and/or addresses for the following classmates:

- Evelyn Virginia Boasley
- Mary Lee Bishop
- Dessie Lee Brown
- Blanche Majesta Henson
- Kathryn Roberta Jones
- Dorothy Allen McDaniel
- Elmer Oliver
- William Roosevelt Revels
- Ethel Lynette Scott
- Chrizzelle Smith
- James Walker
- Evelyn Helene Whitt
- Anna Woody Williams

If you have information on any of these classmates, please call (Mrs.) Ruth S. Boyd at 596-6747 or (Mrs.) Doris L. Reddick at 596-1016 or 544-7495.

The committee is also searching for information and/or addresses of anyone starting Hillside with the class who did not finish for some reason in 1943.

Our sincere thanks to all who have furnished us with addresses. Don't stop! We want to find every single classmember.



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9:30 A.M. Sunday Church School
11:00 A.M. Morning Worship

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