

Hope for male baldness

FDA gives nod to stronger version of popular topical drug Rogaine. See page 15A.

The real toy story



Playtime is learning time

By Jeri Young THE CHARLOTTE POST

Weeks of Christmas shopping culminate in a split second when a child tears open a package and finds Tickle me Elmo or the perfect Cabbage Patch Kid.

But experts say parents should think hard about the kinds of toys and dolls they pick for children. What's popular may not be the most appropriate age-wise or culturally. They also caution against choosing expensive gifts.

"Many adults buy gifts with

the goal of seeing an excited reaction to the newly-opened present," said Louise Davis, extension child and family development specialist at Mississippi State University.

"But the real test of success will be the amount of and quality of play with toys. How long will the child play with it? How will the toy benefit the child's development?"

Charlotte social worker and family counselor Sunya Folyan says it's imperative children have toys that reinforce them culturally and are reflective of their appearance.

"I don't buy my daughters white dolls," Folyan said. "They get enough exposure to white dolls. There are enough black dolls and shades to give any child a sense of themselves."

According to Folyan, parents should introduce their children to well-made toys with reflective features early on. Children begin to build their ideas of what is beautiful before they are 3 years old. In those early years, positive images are important.

"Everything that is brown or dark is not always made-well

or reflective of our features," Folyan said. "A doll should be reflective of what parents want to show their children. Parents should make sure toys do not present a stereotypical caricature of what we are."

Folyan points out that while many dolls have dark faces or are dressed in African fabrics, their message may be misconstrued.

"I think Kente cloth is overdone," Folyan said. "It is not to be placed on everything. The same goes with mud cloth. Yes,

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Selecting toys for children can be difficult. Stores carry a dizzying assortment of dolls and toys. Experts say toys should be reflective of the child and allow for playtime creativity. Tanegla Spellman (top) searches for the perfect doll at the Toys R Us store on Independence. In the weeks leading up to Christmas and Kwanzaa, The Post and counselor Sunya Folyan will look at the best toy choices for kids.

Drugs for cholesterol may pose slight risk

By Daniel Q. Haney THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORLANDO, Fla. - Lowering your cholesterol to prevent a heart attack might also dull your edge mentally, a study suggests.

The study raised the possibility that cholesterol-lowering drugs slightly reduce dexterity and attention.

Cholesterol-lowering drugs have become mainstays over the past five years after several studies showed they significantly reduce the risk of dying from heart attacks. An estimated 4 million Americans now take the most popular of these medicines, a class

of drugs known as statins.

While the drugs save lives, some doctors have wondered whether these have subtle effects on people's mental and physical performance. Some studies have found that those who lower their cholesterol seem more likely to die in tragedies such as car accidents and suicides, while other research has found no such link.

Researchers say their new study, presented Monday at a meeting of the American Heart Association, is the first to give psychological tests to people taking cholesterol-lowering drugs in an attempt to sort this out.

They emphasized that while their discovery of small decreases in ability are worthy of further study, people should not stop taking their drugs.

Even if the medicines truly do impair performance - and this is not yet proven beyond doubt - their benefits on the heart are still likely to outweigh any possible risks.

"We don't know if this affects people in the way they conduct their lives," said Dr. Matthew F. Muldoon of the University of Pittsburgh, who led the study.

However, even though people might not notice the difference during their daily routine, a slight

decrease in alertness or coordination could be hazardous at times when people need all their abilities, such as when driving, Muldoon said.

Muldoon plans a follow-up to see how people taking cholesterol-lowering drugs do on driving simulations, as well as whether their job performance changes.

Muldoon speculated that the drugs could reduce mental functioning in several ways. For instance, cholesterol particles in the bloodstream are known to carry nutrients such as vitamin A. Further, lowering cholesterol could reduce the brain's supply of chemicals it needs to manufac-

ture signal-carrying proteins.

In the study, Muldoon administered a battery of tests to 194 men and women. Half got lovastatin, or Mevacor, a widely prescribed cholesterol-lowering drug, while the rest got dummy pills. Neither the volunteers nor the researchers knew which they were taking.

Six months later, everyone was tested again. The study found this time that people getting the drugs scored slightly lower than the others on several tests that measure attention and dexterity. There was no significant difference in their memory.



Local TV host highlights BET's 'Teen Summit'

Angela Segal, host of "Singles Talk," a local TV show that tackles dating issues, will be a guest on Saturday's episode of BET talk show "Teen Summit." The popular series will take a look at the teen dating scene. During the live talk show, Segal will take questions from viewers on how to determine the right time to begin dating.

The program is scheduled to air Saturday at noon on channel 59 on Time Warner Cable.

Need a wrap?

Have a gift you just can't figure out how to wrap?

Metrolina Food Bank will tackle the job for you for a small fee.

All proceeds will benefit the Food Bank, which provides food to local relief agencies to help needy families. Gift wrapping service begins at \$3 and increases by size.

The gift wrap booth, which opens Nov. 22, will be located at Carolina Place Mall in Pineville. For more information, call 376-1785.

Center offers support for senior citizens

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Senior Center is offering a series of workshops for grandparents who are surrogate parents to their grandchildren.

The workshops tackle important issues facing grandparents. Two groups of workshops will be held to accommodate school schedules. For more information, call 522-6222.

The workshop schedule is as follows:

- Nov. 24 - Interacting with school personnel
Dec. 1 - Social issues in caring for ages 8 - 12 and adolescent grandchildren
Dec. 8 - Child development
Dec. 15 - Recognizing special needs for grandchildren
All sessions begin at 10 a.m. and will be held at Fighting Back, 1500 N. Tryon St.

- Nov. 25 - Interacting with school personnel
Dec. 4 - Special needs in caring for ages 8 - 12
Dec. 11 - Child development
Dec. 18 - Recognizing special needs for grandchildren
All sessions begin at 7 p.m. and will be held at the Senior Center, 2225 Tyvola Road.

NAACP announces meetings

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP recently announced its end of the year meeting schedule.

Today - Branch Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m., Alexander Funeral Home, 112 Irwin Ave.

Sunday - Religious emphasis service, 6 p.m. Weeping Willow AME Zion, 2220 Milton Road. Speaker: the Rev. Walter Howard pastor of Greater Bethel AME Church.

Dec. 11 - Branch Executive Committee meeting, 7 p.m. Alexander Funeral Home.

Dec. 18 - Branch meeting, 7 p.m. University Park Baptist, 2400 Keller Ave.

The Nov. 27 meeting has been cancelled. For more information, call 334-0207.

Today

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Cover To Cover

'Chile, Hush' is funny

By Jeri Young THE CHARLOTTE POST

Honey, Hush! An Anthology of African American Women's Humor

Edited by Daryl Cumber Dance with foreword by Nikki Giovanni

Norton \$30 1997

What do you get when you cross famed comedian Moms Mabley and rapper Roxanne Shanté.

One heck of a good laugh. Shanté and Moms are but two of the 70 women of all ilk highlighted in "Honey Hush! An Anthology of African American Women's Humor."

What exactly is African American women's humor? Pretty much whatever makes you laugh.

It begins with the title, a southern mantra used to punctuate humor that is too scandalous to be told.

Accordingly, anthology editor Daryl Cumber Dance chooses material worthy of a "honey hush" - scandalous, titillating shorts guaranteed to tease sensibilities.

Dance fills "Honey Hush" with stuff worthy of retelling at any "exhale" party, including passages from Terry McMillan's "Waiting to Exhale."

Dance divides her extensive work into chapters whose names are almost as funny as their contents. She kicks off with "No Big Thing for a 'Oman," and rounds it out with sexual advice in "Nice Girls Don't" handling racism in "Just Like a White Man." Black beauty is poignantly covered in "Mirror Mirror on the Wall." For good measure, she throws in "My People, My People," which goes into gory detail about how black folks live - including a curious piece about ebionics. Dance ends with a general section with humor from everyone, everywhere.

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