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DR. WILLIAM T. CREASMAN

Birth Control Devices May Prevent Cancer

By William Erwin

Couples who use condoms or diaphragms as their birth control method may be helping prevent cervical cancer, a specialist at the Comprehensive Cancer Center said last week.

Dr. William T. Creasman told a symposium here that the devices may protect the cervix — the mouth of the womb — against a suspected cancer-causing substance passed from men to women during intercourse.

"Unfortunately, we don't know what this agent is," the associate professor said. He directs the center's division of gynecologic cancer.

20,000 New Cases

The American Cancer Society estimates that 20,000 new cases of cervical cancer will be discovered in the U.S. this year. Almost 8,000 women will die of the disease, the society says.

Creasman said researchers have

studied funguses and Herpesvirus type II in their search for the cancer-causing substance. The studies turned up no clear-cut answers, he said.

"All we can say," the specialist reported, "is that Herpesvirus may be a related factor, but no cause and effect relationship has been proven."

Whatever the substance is, scientists suspect that it affects women at high risk for cervical cancer, Creasman said.

High Risk Group

Women in this high risk group, he pointed out, include those who begin sexual intercourse early in life or who have many sexual partners.

Other risk factors are marrying early, having several marriages, having pre-marital or extra-marital intercourse or being in the lower socio-economic group.

Women in the lower socio-economic group have a higher risk, Creasman said, not because of their poverty but "because these other risk factors are also present."

He gave one clue that could help

explain why sexually active teenage girls have a high risk for cervical cancer. During the mid-teens, he said, a girl's cervix naturally goes through a change much like that in pre-cancerous conditions.

Vulnerable To Change

"Anytime you have changes in the epithelium (surface of the cervix) taking place, these cells are vulnerable to the slightest change in environment," Creasman said.

"Add to this the environmental hazard of the carcinogen (cancer-causing substance) that the male transmits, and you can see the potential for problems."

A man whose wife already has cervical cancer should be especially discreet in his sexual relationships, the specialist warned. "If a male is married to a female with cancer of the cervix and he takes on a second sexual partner," he said, "the second female has a 12-fold increased risk for cancer of the cervix."

The Pill, he said, neither raises nor lowers a woman's chance of getting cervical cancer.

School of Nursing Includes R.N. Among 93 Freshmen

When her classmates head back to their rooms at Hanes House, nursing freshman Lorraine Mackoviak Wheeler will drive off-campus to her husband and two children at home in Durham.

While her classmates look forward to the challenge of patient care, Mrs. Wheeler can review her almost 10 years of nursing experience.

A graduate of the diploma nursing program at what is now Northwestern University Memorial Hospital, Mrs. Wheeler decided she needed a B.S. degree to expand her career beyond hospital staff nursing.

She is the only registered nurse (R.N.) among the 93 women who just entered the class of 1980 at the School of Nursing.

Another freshman, Maria del Refugio Berumen of Ontario, Calif., is an Angier B. Duke Scholar, selected on the basis of grades and leadership potential.

"Aside from the fact that the nursing school is so outstanding, I love the campus and the people," Miss Berumen said. She plans a double major in nursing and English, and hopes to become a nurse practitioner or nurse-midwife.

The freshmen come from 26 states and two foreign countries. Ten students are from North Carolina. They are Mrs. Wheeler and Wilma Joyce Wilkins of Durham; Elizabeth Sharon Adams and Carolyn Ann Scheil of Lenoir; Marianne Ballenger of Norwood; Anna Liles Burnette of Manson; Kathrine Warden Horn, Katharine Claibourne Johnson and

Nancy Eileen Pernice of Charlotte; and Mavis Ann Mathis of Warsaw.

From overseas are Susanne Mary Meghdadpour of Tehran, Iran, and Mary Wai Ming Yen of Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Students from other states are:

CALIFORNIA — Maria del Refugio Berumen of Ontario and Carole Ann Klove of Los Angeles.

COLORADO — Cynthia Elliott of Denver.

CONNECTICUT — Sarah Anne Kritz of Plantsville; Sara Anne Maddern of Guilford; Margaret Sullivan Murphy of Stamford; Katherine Taves Ogren of Old Greenwich; and Amy Virginia Stances of Litchfield.

DELAWARE — Nancy Kathleen Fleck of Wilmington.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA — Carmen Lea Neuberger of Washington.

FLORIDA — Ruth Willard Calvin of Jacksonville and Linda Gail Schwesky of Clearwater.

GEORGIA — Amy Jackson of Folkston and Carol Anne Love of Atlanta.

ILLINOIS — Darcy Lynn Day of Belvidere; Virginia Laraine Griggs of Scott Air Force Base; Alison Jean Slezak of Western Springs; and Caryl Iver Weinberg of Evanston.

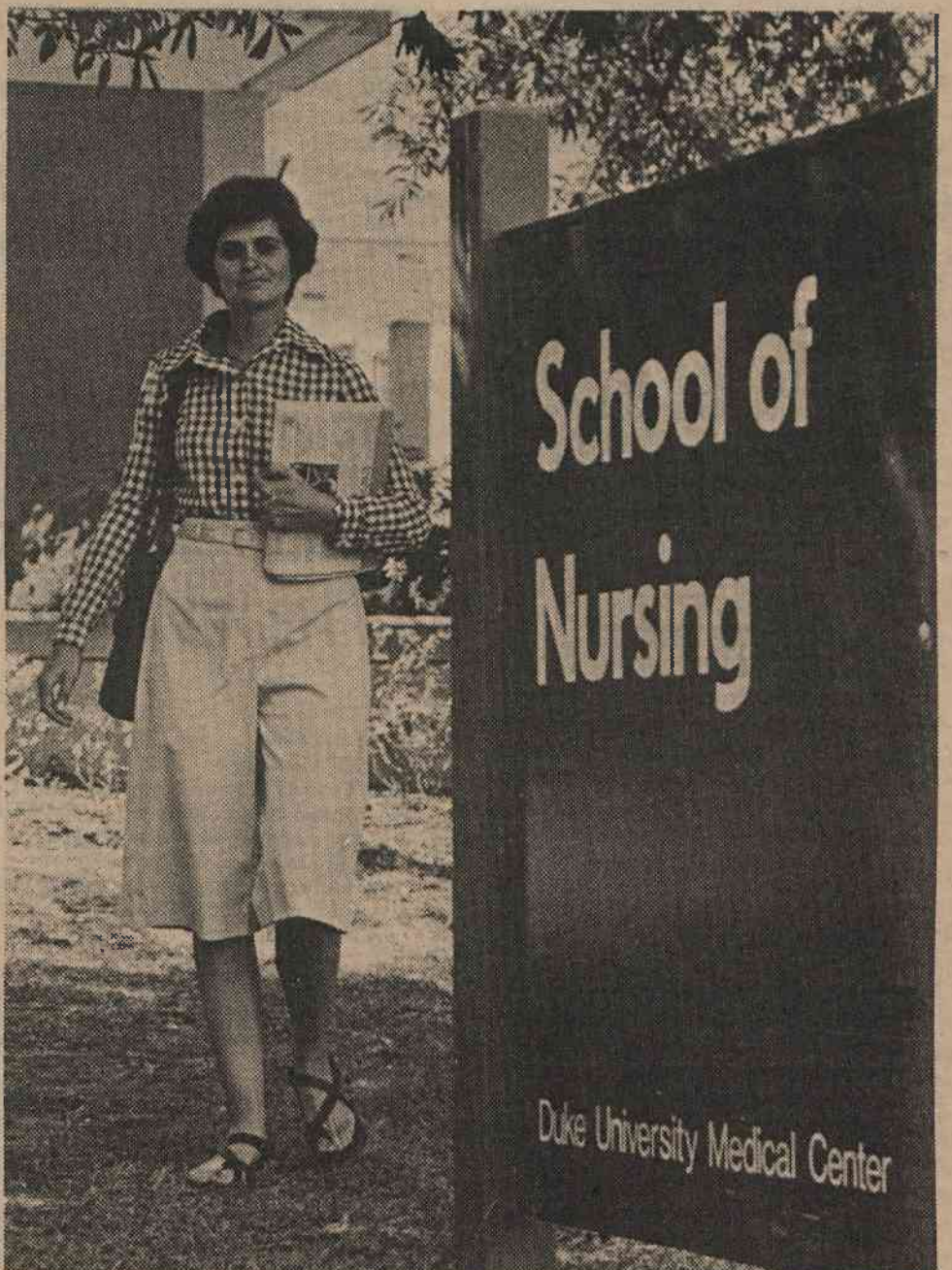
KANSAS — Ann Belle Catlett of Shawnee Mission.

LOUISIANA — Elizabeth Stuart Dyer of New Orleans.

MAINE — Mary Joyce Ford of Bryant Pond and Cynthia Lonsdale Webber of Cape Elizabeth.

MARYLAND — Nancy Sue Baker of Bethesda; Myreda Lynn Erickson of Annapolis; Patricia Louise Hering and Ellen Starr Welliver of Westminster; and Ellen Louise Philpot of Oxon Hill.

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BACK TO SCHOOL—Lorraine Wheeler, R.N., hopes to get her B.S. degree in nursing here. The wife of Kenneth E. Wheeler, assistant administrative director of the hospital, she is among 93 women in the School of Nursing's freshman class. (Photo by Jim Wallace)