

HEALTH NEWS

Health Events, Meetings, Info

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES TO HOLIDAY "SPIRITS" — When friends and family get together for seasonal festivities, offer them an alternative to holiday "spirit" from a bottle. Nothing dampens the holiday mood more than the tragic outcomes related to alcohol and drug use.

If you have a drug or alcohol use problem, call the Durham County Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services at 560-7500. We're here to help.

HOLIDAY STRESS — The holidays are not always jolly for all of us. Stress and feelings of isolation are common during this season. If you need help, or just want a sympathetic ear, call HELPLINE at 683-2392. We're here for you.

FOSTER OR ADOPTIVE PARENTS NEEDED — The Durham County Department of Social Services is seeking families to provide stable and caring homes for children. The January training series is scheduled to begin on Tuesday January 7, with additional classes on January 14, 21, 28 and February 4, 1992. Classes will be held at Durham Technical Community College in the Continuing Education Building. Interested persons are encouraged to call 683-3550 for details.

WEEKLY ACOA/AFG (Adult Child of Alcoholics/Al-Anon Family Group) meets Saturdays at 5:30 pm Mt. Bethel Presbyterian Church 3541 Rose of Sharon Road, Durham.

WORKING WITH EPILEPSY — If you have epilepsy and want to work, but don't know where to turn, contact representatives of the Employment Services Program at the Epilepsy Association of North Carolina in Raleigh. For more information, contact, 834-2876, or 1-800-451-0694.

WIDOWED PERSON'S SUPPORT GROUP BEGINS — Durham County Hospital Corporation's Educational Services/Patient Education department will sponsor a Widowed Person's Support Group beginning in January.

The support group will meet during the day on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Durham Regional Hospital's private Dining Room B located on the first floor of the hospital.

During the evenings, the support group will meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., in Conference Room 96, at the Health Services Center (formerly the Family Medicine Center) located at the corner of North Duke and Crutchfield Streets.

Men and women are welcome and encouraged to attend either support group meeting.

For more information, call Patty Darragh, Patient Education Coordinator at 470-7155.

HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE SUPPORT GROUP BEGINS — Durham County Hospital Corporation's Educational Services/Patient Education department will sponsor a Huntington's Disease Support Group beginning in January.

The support group will meet the 3rd Saturday of each month from 2 to 4 p.m., in classroom 431-A of Durham Regional Hospital.

For more information, call Patty Darragh, Patient Education Coordinator at 470-7155.

MASTECTOMY SUPPORT GROUP BEGINS — Durham County Hospital Corporation's Educational Services/Patient Education department will sponsor a Mastectomy Support Group beginning in January.

The support group will meet evenings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., in the Health Services Center, (formerly the Family Medicine Center) located at the corner of North Duke and Crutchfield Streets, in Conference Room 96.

For more information, call Patty Darragh, Patient Education Coordinator at 470-7155.

ADULT DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP BEGINS — Durham County Hospital Corporation's Educational Services/Patient Education department will sponsor an Adult Diabetes Support Group for Patients and their Families beginning in January.

The support group will meet evenings on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., at the Health Services Center: (formerly the Family Medicine Center) located at the corner of North Duke and Crutchfield Streets, in Conference Room 96.

For more information call Patty Darragh, Patient Education Coordinator at 470-7155.

WEIGHT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP — Call 471-4448 for more information.

"BEYOND THE RHETORIC: DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS TO MINORITY HEALTH ISSUES" — This two day program will be held at the School of Public Health, UNC-Chapel Hill, Feb. 6-7. For more information call (919) 966-4032.

SENSIBLE SLIMMERS — Geared to the African American lifestyle, this class will seek to alter behavior, lose weight safely, test nutritional foods, exercise program, restructure lifestyle for a healthier you. New introductory offer for the first 20 persons to sign up. Call 471-4448 for details.

GENITAL HERPES SUPPORT GROUP — Planned Parenthood of Orange and Durham Counties — HELP is a confidential support group for people concerned about genital herpes. The HELP group meets once a month in Chapel Hill. For more information, call (919) 929-5402.

DUKE POISON CONTROL CENTER — Anyone may call the Duke Poison Control Center for information on poisons, poisoning prevention and the treatment of poisoning. Specially trained health professionals are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

To call in North Carolina, dial 1-800-672-1697; outside the state, or if the toll-free number is busy, dial 1-919-684-8111 and ask for Poison Control Center - Emergency.

DIABETES CLASSES — A series of classes will be held on the first 4 Wednesdays of each month at 2 p.m., at the Durham County Health Department. Classes are free to all Durham County residents.

The classes are for persons diagnosed as having diabetes, their families, and other persons wishing to know more about the disease.

Persons who test their own blood sugar and want instruction in the use of their machine or want their procedure checked, should bring their testing machine and materials to the class held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays.

For more information or to register call 560-7601.

HYPERTENSION & CHOLESTEROL CLASSES — A series of classes are held at 3 p.m. on the first 4 Wednesdays of each month at the Durham County Health Department. Classes are free to all Durham County residents. Sessions 2 and 4 are on low sodium and low cholesterol diets.

The classes are for persons having been diagnosed as having hypertension or an elevated cholesterol level, their families, and persons wishing to know more about the disease. For more information or to register, call 560-7601.

MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENING AND SELF-BREAST EXAM EDUCATION — Mammography Screening Mobile Van Durham County Health Department, 414 E. Main Street, the 3rd Monday of each month. Mammography Screening is available for women 40 years of age and older with no known breast disease or breast cancer. American Cancer Society recommends a baseline mammogram between the ages of 35 and 40, a mammography every 1-2 years between the ages of 40 and 50, and a mammogram yearly after age 50. Breast self-exam should become a monthly lifetime habit for females beginning with their first menstrual cycle.

An appointment is required two (2) weeks prior to screening, and a sliding scale fee is charged with price from \$0 - \$50. Cash only fee is due at the time of the appointment.

Call 560-7610 for an appointment and to determine your cost.

NMA President: Number of Female Physicians Increasing

Alma R. George, M.D., examines the status of American physicians historically and currently in an article, "African American Women in the Medical Profession," in the November issue of the *Journal of the National Medical Association*.

Dr. George, of Detroit, is president of the National Medical Association. She states that it was only after 1970 that the number of all women in medicine increased greatly, rising from 7.1 percent in 1970 to 15.3 percent in 1986.

"It has been estimated by the Department of Manpower and Demographic Studies of the American Medical Association that, by 1996, 40 percent of new medical school graduates will be women, and by the year 2010, women will represent 29.4 percent of all active physicians."

Data on all African American physicians are scarce but data on African American women physicians are even more difficult to trace, Dr. George writes. In 1920, there were 65 African American women physicians, by 1970, there were 1,051 and 3,153 by 1980. Dr. Rebecca Lee, who received her medical degree from New England Female Medical College in Boston in 1864, was the first documented African American woman physician in the United States. Three years later, Dr.

Rebecca J. Cole graduated from Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

Dr. George notes that various African American women physicians have distinguished themselves in the ensuing years up to the present. She refers to a 1983 national survey on career plans of resident physicians which indicated that "the increase of women and minority physicians during the 1970s facilitated the government's goals for better specialty and geographic distribution of physicians."

The survey also found that minorities and women, to a greater extent than minority men or white women, were still practicing in more traditional fields; internal medicine, pediatrics, general or family practice and obstetrics and gynecology.

Dr. George also discusses the number of women who are board certified, their practice patterns and their leadership roles in various professional organizations. She draws two important conclusions: "First, while progress has been made since the 1970s, one may conclude that African American women are moving at a much slower pace in closing the gap between themselves and white male physicians, while minority men and non-minority women are almost on the verge of closing the gap. Second, the African American community must not let the increase in African American women's enrollment in medical schools come at the expense of the African American male's

enrollment and the overall minority admission percentages, which have either leveled off or dropped in many schools over the last decade.

"It is imperative that the numbers and percentages of African American male and female medical students are increased simultaneously to eradicate the insufficient number of physicians serving in the African American community."

Dr. George, a surgeon, is president of the 200-physician staff of newly named Mercy Hospital in

Detroit. The *Journal* is the official publication of the National Medical Association. NMA, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is the oldest Black professional organization in the United States. It was founded in 1895 and speaks for more than 16,000 physicians in the U.S., including the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Its primary goal is to improve the health care of all Americans, particularly the poor and underserved minority population.



Your body, your skin & you

dialogue

DEAR DIALOGUE: Are there such things as growing pains? My son complains of pain in his legs.
C.E., Highland Park, Mich.

DEAR C.E.: Dr. Barton Schmitt of Children's Hospital in Denver, Colo., says, yes. Mild leg aches brought on by bursts in physical activity they affect one in 10 school-age children. Stretching exercises help.

DEAR DIALOGUE: I need some major dental work and I'm petrified. Do you have any advice for me?
B.D., Milwaukee, Wis.

DEAR B.D.: Sure do, and here it is: Try to avoid traveling during the middle of dental work. Pressure changes induced by changes in altitude while flying or ascending can cause intense pain in incomplete root canal work. Aspirin can relieve pain somewhat, but it should be swallowed—not placed on a sore tooth. Oil of clove, applied in a cotton ball around the tooth can help, too. If you should knock out a tooth, keep it moist and rush to a dentist. It might be saved. Neither ice nor whiskey applied to a toothache will much relieve it. A loose crown can be kept in place temporarily with denture adhesive. And, when all the work is complete, you'll be relieved it's over. Fortunately new equipment and techniques have greatly improved dental processes and cause minimal discomfort.

DEAR J.T.: Call the toll-free Meat Poultry Hotline, set up by Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. Dial 1-800-535-4557.

Do you have a question about personal hygiene or wellness? Write The Dial Corporation, Dial Tower, Phoenix, AZ 85077-2201. For a personal reply send a SASE.

Higher Loss Is Making More People Listen

CHICAGO, Ill. — Do you feel that when you're talking to your children it goes in one ear and out of the other? It may be more than youthful inattention but a cause for real concern. Audiologists are reporting an increase in hearing loss among school-aged children and young adults. This has created a great concern for parents and educators alike.

Mona Thomas, of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), writes about hearing loss in the December/January issue of the National PTA's award-winning magazine *PTA Today*. "More than 21 million Americans, including many children and teenagers, are exposed everyday to noise levels that could result in permanent hearing loss," says Thomas. "Amplified musical instruments, farm machinery, power tools operated in industrial arts classes and firearms have been cited as sources of noise responsible for noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) among school-age children and teenagers," she continues.

The National PTA offers the following suggestions to help keep noise levels down.

- * Sound proof your home. Hard surfaces such as tile floors and bare walls amplify noise. Use draperies, carpets and bulky furniture to soak up the sound.

- * Monitor your child's use of personal stereo systems. Make sure that they do not wear the headset for prolonged periods of time.

Also tell them not turn up the volume to drown out environmental noise because they will just compound the hearing damage.

- * Avoid loud music. When listening to music, don't sit close to the sound source.

- * If you must engage in noisy activities, alternate them with periods of quiet. Give your ears time to rest.

- * Help control environmental noise. For exposure to noise you cannot control, cover your ears tightly with your hands. If your community has a noise ordinance, find out what you can do to help enforce it.

- * Most important, be aware of the early signs of hearing loss. When you suspect a hearing loss — in yourself or your children — consult a certified audiologist for a hearing evaluation and treatment.

TV-Free Activities

If you're like many parents, you'd probably like to replace some of your youngster's TV viewing with more family time. Well you can, say Steve and Ruth Bennett. The games and activities you can come up with require little or no preparation, yet provide hours of entertainment and play that might otherwise be spent in front of the tube.

Happily, just about any kind of container, lid, or cardboard tube can be turned into a nifty toy or activity.

Did you know that:

- * Unused paper towel tubes are a squandered precious resource. They can be used for everything from a telescope to the main piece of a wind chime.

- * The tops of plastic containers make great dials and meters for play dashboards. Plastic milk jugs make great piggy banks. J catcher's mitts.

- * Cotton from vitamin bottles is very important for making puppet hair, volcano smoke and other items.

These are just some of the ideas taken from the Bennetts' new book, *365 TV-Free Activities You Can Do With Your Child* (\$6.95, Bob Adams, Inc.). The bestselling book is based on their experience in raising children without television.

SAFE BABYSITTING

Parents often turn to teenage babysitters to watch their children after school and on the weekends.

Dr. Patricia Keener, founder of Safe Sitter, Inc., recommends that parents talk with their babysitters about precautionary steps that can ensure children's safety. Safe Sitter, a not-for-profit, medically-oriented instructional program, trains adolescents in safe babysitting skills.

"Parents should encourage babysitters to come early so that there is plenty of time for the child to adjust to the sitter's presence, the parents' departure and for the parents to discuss the job responsibilities," recommends Dr. Keener.

"If the children are playing outside, it is important to discuss the possibility of bee stings," Keener warns.

Sitters should be cautioned to avoid any chance of exposure if the child they are caring for has a history of allergic reaction to bee stings.

Young children may enjoy jumping and playing in piles of leaves. Dr. Keener recommends that parents counsel sitters to keep rakes safely out of the way and to be sure the leaf pile is free of sticks or other sharp objects before allow-



ing the children to jump.

"Of course, the children should also be reminded to jump feet first," Keener warns.

Whenever children are outdoors, Dr. Keener strongly recommends that sitters never leave them unattended. "Sitters should always stay with the children," she said.

"Teenagers love horror shows and it might be wise to discuss television viewing with the sitter to specifically prohibit shows which the teen may not realize are nightmare material for the young child," reminds Dr. Keener.

Dr. Keener emphasizes taking the time to discuss accident prevention with sitters.

"There are no short cuts to taking time to discuss these issues. In addi-

tion, you should leave the number of an available adult who could contact your home immediately if an accident should occur and your sitters needs the support of an adult. An aid chart should also be available in your home and should be pointed to your sitter along with first aid supplies," recommends Dr. Keener.

Above all, Dr. Keener believes education is the best defense against accidents. "While knowing first aid is important, learning how to prevent accidents is more important."

The national Safe Sitter program is funded in large part by a grant from The Gerber Companies Foundation. For further information a Safe Sitter program, write to: Safe Sitter, 1500 N. Ritter Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46219.

To help make the home a safer place for young children, Gerber offers a free booklet, *The Gerber Safety Guide*. The informational booklet is filled with safety tips and suggested measures to help prevent accidents.

Copies of *The Gerber Safety Guide* are available upon written request. Gerber Products Company, Dept. Sitter, 445 State St., Fremont 94613.