

## HEALTHY BODY/HEALTHY MIND

# Glaucoma treatable is caught early

William  
Lucas

For years, I've been a big fan of Kirby Puckett, the Minnesota Twins center fielder. But as much as I admired his performance on the baseball diamond, I believe he's doing a much more heroic job now: helping people avoid the blindness that forced Kirby to retire from baseball.

Last year during spring training, Kirby woke up seeing a black dot in his right eye.

"Initially, I wasn't concerned," he recalls. "But the doctors were more concerned. My vision quickly deteriorated from 20/20 to 20/200. They told me I had early stage glaucoma, which put pressure on the blood vessels in my right eye and interfered with the circulation to my retina. After several surgeries to try to improve blood flow to my right retina, my doctors told me the damage was permanent. My

career as a professional baseball player was over."

Kirby, who is now blind in his right eye, is one of nearly 120,000 Americans who lose all or part of their sight each year due to glaucoma. African Americans, people with diabetes or high blood pressure, people over 40 and people with a family history of glaucoma are most at risk.

Glaucoma is a disease that has no symptoms but is easily detected with a quick, painless test by an eye doctor. The good news is that if the disease is diagnosed early enough, treatment with prescription eye drops can help patients avoid blindness. There are different kinds of these medicines available. Some reduce the production of fluid that creates pressure on the optic nerve. Others help drain the fluid. Kirby Puckett now uses these eye drops to prevent blindness in his left eye.

Although he is off the field, Kirby is still very much a team

player. Working with Pharmacia & Upjohn, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, The Glaucoma Foundation, the Glaucoma Research Foundation and Prevent Blindness America, Kirby is spearheading a program to encourage all Americans over 40 to be screened for glaucoma.

"Glaucoma is a disease that people don't think about until they or a family member are diagnosed," he says. "It is estimated that 50 percent of glaucoma cases go undiagnosed each year. Many people, like me, may not have any symptoms until they have already lost some sight. All of us, particularly those in high risk groups, have to see a doctor to be tested for glaucoma. It only takes about 10 minutes, and it's painless. Perhaps if I had been tested on a routine basis, all of this could have been prevented."

Despite his loss of vision, Kirby finds much to be thankful for: "my wife, two children and

the satisfaction of enjoying a successful baseball career. Glaucoma cannot change that. In fact, I'm going to use this change in my life to help others learn more about how to fight glaucoma. If only one person out of one hundred I speak to is able to start treating this disease before it costs them their vision, I will consider it a victory—as sweet as winning the World Series."

So follow Kirby's advice and step up to the plate. Ask your doctor about glaucoma screening.

If you believe you are at risk and you have no health insurance, call Glaucoma 2001 at 800-391 EYES. This public service organization may be able to provide a free glaucoma test.

Larry Lucas is Associate Vice President of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

For a free booklet about glaucoma, call Prevent Blindness America at 800-331-2020.

## Cut down on teen television time for health

By Alex Sherman, M.D.  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Most teenagers spend too much time watching television and playing video games and not enough time being active. Television and video games can be fun, but to be fit your body needs to run, jump, stretch and do work. Mounting evidence shows that heart disease and many other serious illnesses can begin as early as age 10. To get fit you need to do both aerobic exercises as well as toning and strengthening exercises along with meeting all your nutritional needs.

Aerobic exercise primarily works the heart, lungs and circulatory system. Aerobic workouts will also help you burn body fat if you do 30 minutes or more of continuous movement. It takes your body 20 minutes to switch to the fat burning stage during a workout. Try to get in at least 30 to 45 minutes of aerobic exercise three to four times a week. Try to keep your aerobic workout under 60 minutes. This way you won't overdo it and you'll decrease your risk of injury due to repetitive stress. Thirty to 45 minutes is ideal, but you may have to start below 10 minutes and increase your workout time gradually.

Some examples of aerobic exercise include 30 minutes or more of brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, walking in a pool, aerobic dance and

jumping rope. If you're trying to lose weight, aerobic workouts with good eating habits will help you see results within a few weeks.

To get started with a walking or jogging program start with 10 minutes. Add two minutes each week until you reach 30 to 45 minutes. To determine how far you should walk or jog for your age divide your age by three. One mile in 20 minutes is a good pace for 5-8 year olds and one mile in 12 minutes is a pace good for a child over nine.

Riding your bike is a great form of aerobic exercise. But,

you should follow some safety tips. More than 2 million people under the age of 18 receive bicycles for gifts each year. And each day one child dies from a bicycle injury. Most of these injuries can be avoided.

When you ride a bicycle for fun or exercise, remember to start with short distances at a steady pace. Build on your distance, speed and time. To get the most out of your cycling, you should adjust your seat so that your legs are fully extended when the pedal is at the bottom of your bike. At the top, the toes should be tilted back and

the heel slightly down. You should always pedal with the ball of the foot and not your toes.

You also need to do some toning and strength building exercises for a totally fit body. Calisthenic, resistance training with weights or machines will strengthen and tone your body. Weight training for teens is a good way to help strengthen and shape the body, but there are some exercises you should avoid.

If you're under 18 you should never do heavy weight bearing exercises such as deadlifts, behind the neck presses, bent lateral raises, deadlifts, clean and jerk, standing toe raises and squats with weights on the back. These exercises place too much stress on the spine and joint areas because your bones are still growing and not completely fused.

### Los Amigos present blankets



Las Amigas president, Dora Johnson (left) and vice president, Joyce Waddell present blankets to residents of the Salvation Army Shelter for Women.

### Around Charlotte

#### Saturday

•The Charlotte Alumni Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity will present a Minority Business Expo at noon at the Greenville Center, 1330 Spring St.

•Focus on Leadership will host its annual Unsung Heroes Awards Gala and Diamond Celebration at 6 p.m. at the Charlotte Marriott Executive Park. The keynote speaker will be Black Entertainment Television commentator and author, Tavis Smiley. Tickets are \$40.

#### Monday

•A nine-week free weight loss and exercise clinic begins Monday at 5:30 at the AME Zion Wellness Center, 3032 Lake Shore Drive. For more information, call 599-4630.

#### Tuesday

•Alzheimer's Advocacy Day will be held in Raleigh. A Charlotte delegation will leave at 7 a.m. Delegation members will also meet with legislators to discuss the disease. To volunteer, call (800) 888-6971.

#### April 10

•Greater Charlotte Professional Women will present "Leadership 2000: Women and the 21st Century" at University Place Hilton, 6:30 p.m. The featured speaker will be Tan Kirby. Tickets are \$25. For more information, call 344-3813.

#### April 12

•Unique Chapter No. 647 will sponsor an Oldies but Goodies dance at Pisgah Lodge No. 266, W 3312 Tuckaseegee Road. Donations are \$10. For more information, call Preston Davis at 527-9687 or Lillian Wardlaw at 394-0639.

If you have  
trouble receiving  
your subscription to  
the Post please contact  
us at  
**704-376-0496**  
Thank you

**C.W. Williams  
Health Center**

3333 Wilkinson Blvd. • (704) 393-7720

*"We Provide Primary & Preventive Medical Care for the ENTIRE FAMILY"*

On Site Pharmacy, X-Ray & Laboratory Services

Call For Appointment or Information  
Hours: Wed. & Fri, 8:30am - 5:30pm,  
OPEN THREE EVENINGS FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE  
Mon, Tue. & Thur. 8:30am - 8:30pm  
Medicare • Medicaid • Sliding Fee • Costwise/PCP • Private Ins.

**"WHERE CARE AND COMPASSION  
COMES TOGETHER"**

### CHOICES

### CHOICES

### CHOICES

As a Maxicare/Medicaid Member *choices* abound!  
Now, you have an option to long waits and never seeing the same doctor twice.

WITH MAXICARE, YOU GET:

- Your own private doctor,
- One hour (or less) service with scheduled appointments,
- Access to our complete network of specialists,
- Medical Advice line available to you 24 hours-a-day!

Discover the difference between *ordinary* care and  
**MAXICARE!!**



Maxicare North Carolina, Inc.  
The company that wants  
you to be  
choosy!!

1-800-350-6294

### BIG LEAGUE SPORTS ARE HERE



### WHICH WILL COME FIRST?

SUPERBOWL?

CHARLOTTE  
HASN'T HAD  
EITHER ONE

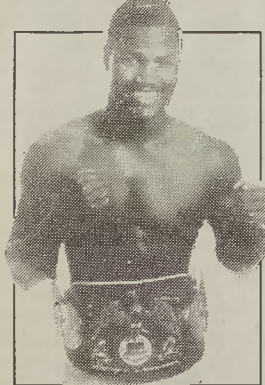
N.B.A. CHAMPIONSHIP?



**YET**



BUT WE'VE  
ALREADY HAD



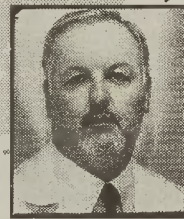
KELVIN SEABROOKS  
COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR

A WORLD  
CHAMPION  
BOXER,  
KELVIN SEABROOKS,

and

HIS CHIROPRACTOR  
**DR. WATTS**

OF A&W CLINIC, HELPS KEEP KELVIN'S BACK IN SHAPE  
IF YOUR BACK OR NECK IS INJURED  
**CALL 393-3333**



DR. DENNIS WATTS, D.C.

WITH 3 OFFICES ON: BEATTIES FORD, WILKINSON & THE PLAZA  
OUR STAFF WILL TREAT YOU LIKE A WORLD CHAMPION