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Section

LIFE



IN RELIGION
Author Charles Rivers gets to the heart of marriage in his new book.

Blood sugar campaign tackles silent disorder

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRENTON, N.J. — Getting fatter around the middle? Have a family history of heart disease or diabetes? You could be headed for the same trouble, particularly if you're over 40 and female.

Because there are no obvious symptoms of high blood sugar or insulin resistance, few people realize it is creeping up and putting them on the path to diabetes and heart disease, experts say.

The National Women's Health Resource Center based in Red Bank, is hoping to change that with a new public health campaign targeting women aged 40 to 65—a group whose members are at greater risk than others, and often hold the role of Dr. Mom.

"Women are the gatekeepers to the health of the family, so I do think it's appropriate to let them know it's stalking their children," said Dr. David Katz, a preventative health expert who is an adviser to the center.

In the years leading up to menopause, hormonal changes in women trigger symptoms such as hot flashes and gradually end menstruation, making women more likely to accumulate fat around the waistline than in other places.

At the same time, fat builds up in the liver and other vital organs, predisposing women to a growing problem called insulin resistance, in which insulin no longer can get enough glucose into cells for fuel, said Katz, co-founder of the Yale Prevention Research Center and author of several books on weight control.

The body's compensatory mechanisms eventually fail, blood pressure rises along with blood sugar and blood fat levels—making cells even more resistant to insulin—and diabetes, heart disease or both often follow.

"That's the sequence that's occurring in tens of millions of American adults" and increasing numbers of kids amid the country's obesity epidemic, said Katz, who estimates half of overweight and obese American adults are insulin resistant.

"It's an enormous problem," he said. "We're just starting to get doctors' attention."

Audrey Sheppard, chief executive of the resource center, said that even women with a family history of heart disease or diabetes often don't know they need to eat a healthier diet and get more exercise to prevent such conditions, which are among the nation's top killers.

"We think this is a very important new issue for women," Sheppard said. "There's very little awareness."

The center, which provides information on dozens of health conditions and promotes a healthy lifestyle through its Web site, last week added a new section to the site for the campaign, called "Be Blood Sugar Aware." Besides explaining how uncontrolled blood sugar harms the body, it offers tips for maintaining a healthy blood sugar level. It also provides questions patients can ask a doctor.

Other groups, including the American Diabetes Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also support education programs emphasizing a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Among the research showing their benefits is a recent CDC study that found modestly overweight adults who worked with nutrition and exercise experts reduced risk of developing diabetes by nearly 60 percent over several years, compared with a group that made no changes, said Dr. Henry Kahn, a chronic disease epidemiologist in the CDC's diabetes division.

The key warning sign that people need to see a doctor and take action is a waistline bigger than 34 inches for women and 40 inches for men, said Katz.

Women who have had diabetes temporarily

Please see **BLOOD SUGAR/2B**

Expo's goal: Expose African American business to all



THE STOCK MARKET

By Cheris F. Hodges

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Black businesses will be on display this weekend at the first Charlotte Black Business Expo.

Hosted and produced by Emmanuel Media, the Restoration Television Network and Kreative Planning and Marketing, the event is designed to promote networking among black businesses and consumers.

"When I first came to Charlotte, I was surprised to see that there was not a homegrown black business expo," said Cherie Shepherd-Chatmon, one of the organizers. "And this is a passion of mine. I want to see businesses do well.

"We're going to have vending booths and entertainment from around the city. One of the things that we're most excited about is that we're going to have the Charlotte urban talent search."

Winners of the talent search will be eligible for studio time and get to audition in front of radio executives and recording industry professionals.

Shepherd-Chatmon said the talent search will run all year and the finals will be held during the CIAA basketball tournament this spring.

The Black Expo boasts a variety of black business participants, such as jewelers and churches. University City Pastor Michael Stevens will be signing

copies of his new book "Straight Up," at the event.

The one-day event, Shepherd-Chatmon said, is an opportunity to meet someone who can help propel their business.

"We need to network. As African Americans we need to support each other in business more than we do," she said. "It's vital that African American business promote their businesses. I want for businesses to interact with each other and grow together."

There will be several seminars at the event, including a building your business credit workshop, Shepherd-Chatmon said.

The event runs from 12-8 p.m. on Saturday and will be held at

Please see **EXPO/3B**



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Cupcake classics

Sugar-filled confections come of age with adults

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The cupcake is a classic, let's face it. An unsung favorite for eons, in recent years it has hit the culinary pop charts, even the art scene. The sugary little darlings have become big business, but they still retain their cozy place in our hearts.

These days not only do bakeries across the country sell cupcakes, you can go out to eat at a cupcake cafe and choose a ritzy cupcake from the dessert menu of an upscale restaurant. You can order cupcakes online from cupcake boutiques, there are plenty of cookbooks focusing only on cupcakes, and you can get married with cupcakes starring at the wedding feast.

Celebrity has spotlighted cupcakes from the Magnolia Bakery in New York City, munched in endless reruns of television's "Sex and the City," and cupcakes from Sprinkles in Beverly Hills, sent by Barbara Streisand as a gift to Oprah Winfrey.

Dede Wilson's newly published "A Baker's Field Guide to Cupcakes" (Harvard Common Press, 2006, \$17.95) is as smart and handy as

a cupcake itself: a colorful ringbound collection of some 60 recipes for every occasion, each with photo and "field notes" besides loads of other tips.

Children have always felt a close link to these diminutive confections, Wilson pointed out recently, speaking from her home in Massachusetts. After all, each cupcake is yours alone. "All of that cake and frosting is just for you."

Also, she said, "I think for a lot of us as children cupcakes seemed to be tied in with school functions—you often didn't see them outside that mother-child home-baking connection."

That was then.

"Now we see how versatile they are, how fun. They'll go from a homey bake sale to an individual dessert for a shower, to a campy, kitschy item for adult holidays."

(Just now, food and women's magazines are filled with ideas for turning cupcakes into spiders, mummies, and all things Halloween.)

Indeed, cupcakes have now totally grown

Please see **CUPCAKES/2B**

The power of patent leather accessories

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — One of the shining stars of the fall fashion season is patent leather.

Yes, years ago it was considered a summer item—it was a way to lighten up black accessories to go with lighter clothes. It's also been associated with little girl Mary



PHOTO/LUCID.UK.COM

Janes and the 1960s' mod look.

This year, though, patent is sophisticated. And cool—even wintery.

It's also colored. In addition to black, shoppers will find patent leather accessories in white, navy, red and camel.

Please see **PATENT/2B**



Adults and immunizations

Each year, over 40,000 adults die from vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis A and B, and influenza.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, African Americans have one of the lowest adult immunization rates compared to other racial and ethnic subgroups. Given the current statistics, there is a great need to increase awareness of adult immunizations and when they should be administered in the African American community.

Did you know that before the modern era of vaccines the only way you could be protected from certain diseases was if you actually came down with that disease? Of course, this instance assumed you survived the illness in the first place, and many people did not. You may have read about the Plague that wiped out vast numbers of people back in the Middle Ages. Well, we have come a long way.

In the last column on vaccines, we discussed the origin of the word vaccine and how it was discovered that exposure to cow pox provided protection against another, more serious disease: small pox. Today we have many more vaccines that allow us to develop immunity to a variety of diseases caused by viruses and bacteria. Now, let's review some key facts about adult immunizations.

How immunizations work

Vaccines fall into two categories: live attenuated and the dead/inactivated. A live attenuated vaccine contains a virus that, although living, has been altered so it can no longer cause disease. It does, however, stimulate the immune system to produce antibodies, or immunoglobulins (Ig), just like a real virus would. A dead/inactivated virus vaccination causes the immune system to develop protection in a similar manner. When we come in contact with the real virus or bacteria, our immune system is activated and we are able to mount an effective defense, thereby avoiding the more serious disease.

A number of misconceptions exist regarding immunizations. Some people mistakenly believe that receiving a vaccination will increase their likelihood of contracting the disease. This assumption could not be more wrong. Others refuse vaccinations because they fear side effects, which include local tenderness, redness, swelling, and low-grade fever.

However, oftentimes adverse reactions are not attributed to the vaccine itself, but rather to trace amounts of substances found within the vaccine. Individuals with allergies to eggs, egg proteins, neomycin, or streptomycin should not receive certain vaccines. Also, individuals who have had previous episodes of hypersensitivity following prior contact with a vaccine or its components (anaphylaxis) or neurologic complications may not be good candidates for certain vaccines. It is important to discuss any allergies or other important health information with your doctor before receiving any immunizations.

Please see **ADULT/3B**



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