

Reye's syndrome perils young

By CHERYL CHODUN

On Aug. 14, 1976, Jenny Philion was a healthy, active six-year-old, somersaulting across the lawn of her West Bloomfield home.

One week later, she lay near death in the intensive care unit at William Beaumont Hospital. Three more days went by, and despite every possible effort by doctors, Jenny was dead—stricken with a rare and often fatal disorder known as Reye's syndrome.

"It all began with what might have been just a bad cold."

Jenny had only seemed mildly ill the first few days with what appeared to be some sort of summer flu virus," said her mother, Sharon Philion.

Mrs. Philion and her husband Conrad started to worry when Jenny began complaining of an upper-stomach pain. She kept putting a cool washcloth on her stomach, and I was afraid she might be having an attack of appendicitis," said Mrs. Philion.

Jenny began vomiting, so her mother took her to the family pediatrician who diagnosed Jenny as having a "flu bug" and suggested the usual home treatments, rest and little if nothing to eat or drink until the vomiting stopped. They went home.

That night, Jenny began to crave water and vomit more frequently, so the former Southfield couple called the pediatrician again. However, the answering service connected Mrs. Philion to the wrong doctor.

NOT REALIZING the mistake, Mrs. Philion anxiously began to describe Jenny's symptoms to the pediatrician she had mistakenly contacted, Dr. Lowell Dodge of Royal Oak's Wake Clinic. Dodge didn't like the sound of the symptoms and asked the Philions to bring Jenny to Beaumont Hospital so that he could examine her.

Jenny was alert and talking as she

walked into the hospital, yet within a few short hours she became critically ill.

After learning the results of two blood tests, Dodge called the Philions into conference and told them his diagnosis. It was Reye's syndrome. "I had read about it once a few years before, and remembering what I had read, I became very frightened," said Mrs. Philion.

The following morning, Jenny became incoherent, screaming and thrashing. Then she fell into a coma. She never regained consciousness, but struggled on for several days.

Once, after doctors had told the Philions there was little if any hope left, Jenny rallied slightly, moving an arm and leg.

"I got so excited, I thought my little girl had really made a liar out of the doctor and would prove them wrong," said Mrs. Philion, "but you know how moms are, always hoping a miracle will happen for their child."

But it didn't. Jenny died on Aug. 26, 12 days after the onset of what appeared to be a mild, summer flu bug.

MOST VICTIMS of Reye's syndrome, like Jenny Philion, are struck after contracting a viral illness such as the flu or chickenpox, said Dr. Edgardo Arcinue, director of the Reye's Syndrome Study Center at Children's Hospital in Detroit.

Arcinue said that a child (Reye's only afflicts children three-months-old to 18-years-old) may seem to be recovering from the first illness when the following symptoms of Reye's appear:

- Persistent vomiting;
- Listlessness;
- Personality change;
- Disorientation;
- Heavy and fast breathing;
- Pupil dilation; and

The center is staffed by three teams of scientists from Wayne State University Medical School as well as pediatricians from Children's Hospital. Dr. Edgardo Arcinue, chief pediatric intensivist at the hospital, is the director.

Original support for Reye's research at Children's Hospital came from the families of children who have succumbed to this lethal children's disease.

Some of these same parents helped to form the Reye's Syndrome Association. The association is dedicated to

• Ultimately, a coma.

Eighty per cent of all untreated Reye's victims die. With prompt hospitalization and treatment, the mortality rate has been cut to 50 per cent.

The disorder was identified in 1963 by an Australian pathologist, Dr. Ralph D. Reye, who called it a syndrome because it is thought to be caused by a combination of factors rather than by a specific virus.

It attacks the liver and the brain and central nervous system, but the cause of Reye's is not understood and specific therapy remains unknown.

INFORMATION from the Reye's Syndrome Study Center (RSSC) indicates that Reye's is primarily a disease of white, suburban children, equally divided between sexes. It strikes more frequently in states surrounding the Great Lakes. Michigan has the highest reported incidence of Reye's syndrome in the country.

The disorder can occur any time of year, but is more likely to strike dur-

ing the winter, following influenza outbreaks.

At the present time the only treatment for Reye's victims is supportive care—replacing body fluids, aiding respiration and circulation and administering drugs which control convulsions. As the condition worsens, blood transfusions or replacement may be tried.

Until more research can be done, it will remain a mystery why some children recover completely, others suffer permanent brain damage and most die.

The Philions have become committed supporters of Dr. Arcinue and the researchers at RSSC.

"We won't turn our back on Reye's syndrome," said Mrs. Philion. "In these modern times of research of all types they must be able to find a cure for a disease that can so quickly take the life of a healthy, robust child."

The Philions, who have one other daughter, Diane, 10, are expecting a baby in the fall.

Reye's group needs aid

Research into the cause and cure of Reye's syndrome is only one aspect of the work being done at the Reye's Syndrome Study Center (RSSC).

The center, located at Children's Hospital in Detroit, also trains doctors to recognize and treat the disorder, provides a statewide "hotline" for instance consultations, and refers possible victims for qualified medical care.

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publicizing the work of the center as well as helping to raise money for continued research.

Arcinue told a recent gathering of the association that to run the research program fully about \$150,000 annually would be needed. To run in "on a shoestring" will take \$80,000.

Arcinue also stressed the importance of a public awareness program. "Some cases of Reye's have been misdiagnosed as drug overdoses, meningitis or encephalitis," said Arcinue.

The association plans to send information on Reye's to Detroit area schools, police departments, pediatricians and hospitals, said a spokesman for Children's Hospital.

Association members are also hoping to arrange television and radio spots on the disease and the work of the RSSC.

Those interested in volunteering assistance should contact Dr. Edgardo Arcinue, Children's Hospital, 494-5630.

Art exhibition set for Botsford

The Palette and Brush Club will present its 31st annual juried membership exhibition April 3 at Botsford Inn, 2800 Grand River near Eight Mile.

Reception is scheduled from 13 p.m. to 4 p.m. April 3. The public is invited to view the exhibition from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. April 3; from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. April

4-7; and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 8.

Renee Radell, well-known artist and instructor, is this year's jurist to select the entrants and award winners. The club is a group of Detroit and suburban women artists interested in study, development and active participation in painting, sculpture and graphics.



Mrs. Richard Atkinson

Margaret Ann Roberts and Richard Michael Atkinson were wed March 5 in ceremonies conducted in St. Patrick Cathedral, New York City. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ray E. Roberts of Fair Haven, N.J., and former residents on Kleiside Lane in Farmington Hills. The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Atkinson, of Little Neck, N.Y.

Mary Margaret Evans of Chicago, Ill., served as maid of honor, with bridesmaids, Valerie Noonan, of N.Y.; Mrs. Daniel Testerman, of Alexandria, Va., a sister of the groom; and Mrs. William Hanley, of Dunwoody, Ga., a sister of the groom.

John L. Atkinson Jr., of Bayside, N.Y., served as his brother's best man, with ushers, Brian Atkinson and James Atkinson, both brothers of the groom; Ray Roberts, of Lansing, Mich.; William A. Roberts, of Tempe, Ariz.; and Paul E. Roberts, of Fair Haven, N.J., all brothers of the bride.

The bride attended North Farmington High School before she graduated from Fair Haven High School in New Jersey and from Michigan State University. She is employed with Gallagher's Restaurant in New York City.

The groom is a graduate of St. Mary High School in Manhasset, N.Y., and attended St. John University, in Jamaica, N.Y., where he was affiliated with Phi Kappa Tau. He is employed with the Sheraton Corporation in New York City.

The couple received guests in New York City's St. Regis Hotel before leaving on a wedding trip to Puerto Rico.

They will make their home in Manhattan.

Restaurant stops serving drinking water

That cold glass of drinking water, long a standard feature, may soon disappear from many restaurants.

Victoria Station, 2865 Northwestern in Southfield, has put into effect a water upon request only policy. The waterless policy will apply not only to the Southfield restaurant, but to all 54 eateries in the San Francisco-based chain.

According to George McCullagh, director of food purchasing and services for Victoria Station, going dry will save energy, gas and (of course) water.

For every glass of water served, McCullagh said, an additional 16 ounces of water is needed to rinse and wash that glass.

About 18-kilowatt hours of electricity are used for every 100 racks that pass through the dishwasher. The use of the dishwasher should be drastically cut by not automatically serving water to customers, he said.

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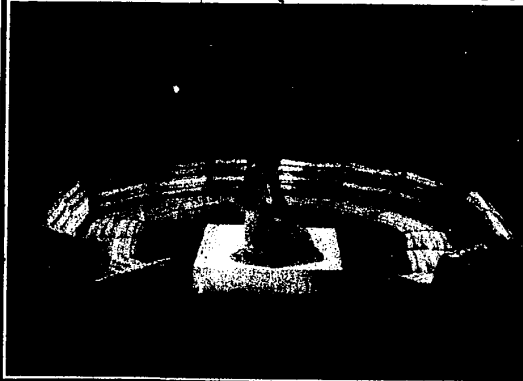
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