

# Kids may be coronary candidates

John sits at a desk most of the day and in front of a television set most of the evening. His sedentary habits make him, like many Americans, a high risk candidate for coronary heart disease. John is 6 years old.

And while he may not have a heart attack tomorrow, he is already forming the habits and bodily conditions that could lead to one, even in childhood, according to Prof. Thomas B. Gilliam of The University of Michigan department of physical education.

"Children are transported to and from school, extracurricular and even sports activities. They sit for long hours watching television and consume lots of high calorie junk food," said Gilliam.

"As a result, children are showing increasing evidence of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity and other conditions which have been shown to be associated with heart disease in adults."

Today's normal children, even those involved in competitive sports (other than track or swimming), rarely experience the kind of high intensity physical activity that is needed to raise the heart rate above 180 beats per minute and foster the development of a strong, healthy heart, Gilliam said.

"A recent U-M study on the physical activity patterns of 80 8-to-10-year-old boys showed that high intensity exertion seldom occurred. Half the boys were ice hockey players who participated in games or practice sessions three times a week. Besides that, the study was conducted during the school year, so the data also reflect the intensity of activities in physical education classes."

Gilliam found that of some 400 Michigan school children he has tested since 1975, almost 50 percent showed one or more risk factors for heart disease, including abnormally high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, overweight

or family history of coronary disease.

The good news is that these risk factors may be reversible.

Gilliam is conducting a three-year study, funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH), to see if vigorous exercise will significantly reduce blood lipids (fats) and blood pressure levels in children, as it has in many adults.

"The early evidence suggests that it can," said Gilliam. "We recently completed a pilot study with 62 third and fourth grade boys and girls. Half participated in their typical physical education classes twice a week, while half were exposed to 12 weeks of intense, rigorous activity four days per week, 25 minutes per session."

"Tests at the beginning and end of the program indicate that children in the experimental group whose blood analysis showed high blood lipids were able to significantly reduce these within the 12-week program," he said.

The NIH project will determine the

effects of a strenuous physical activity program during a period of three years. The study involves seven co-investigators and several graduate students from the U-M departments of physical education, nutrition, pediatrics and internal medicine, and the Mental Research Institute.

Eighty-six first graders now are undergoing the first of a set of tests measuring their body weight and composition, blood analysis, blood pressure and heart beat. Twice a year, they will wear a miniature tape recording device which will record their heart rate for a 12-hour period. In addition, parents will be asked to keep diet and physical activity records for their children for certain five-day periods, and the children will complete short questionnaires on their attitudes toward health, exercise and nutrition.

The key part of the project will be the strenuous physical activity programs for 25 minutes per day.

# Private parks offer activities to campers

Take a camping holiday in Michigan and conserve gas. That's a summer money-saving tip from the Automobile Club of Michigan.

Staying at a private campground is one of the best ways of beating the rising fuel costs and enjoying Michigan in summer, says the AAA.

And to help campers' pockets this summer, about 60 percent of the private parks listed in AAA's 1979 Summer Guide to Campgrounds also offer off-site trailer storage for as little as \$10 per month, a feature not available at any state park.

Parks on AAA's guide charge an average \$5.07 nightly for a reserved site with electricity compared to a state park campground charge of up to \$6. That price includes \$5 for the campsite and a \$1 daily or \$5 annual

entrance permit. There is an additional \$3 charge for campers making reservations at state parks.

Some campgrounds also offer unusual activities according to AAA. Campers can visit a replica of an old west town at Dodge City Campground near Marysville, take a hot air balloon ride at Pinckney's Hell Creek Ranch or explore the state's only natural limestone cave at Bear Cave Resort near Buchanan.

There are farm animals for children at 15 parks, nature trails at 13 and trout ponds or streams at 27 others.

All but 16 list at-site electricity and nearly 70 percent have swimming in pools, ponds or lakes. Eighty-four are national AAA inspected and 33 are highest-rated "approved" facilities.

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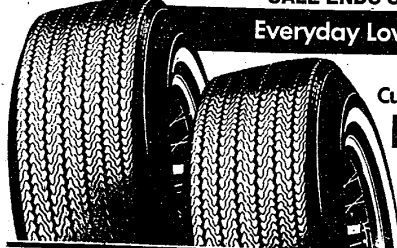
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