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Edelson described osteoporosis as a condition "where the bones become so thin or brittle that they fracture even without trauma." In other words, a bone can break without the individual even having a fall first.

Most of us are familiar with the "dowager's hump" that some elderly women have, due to osteoporosis. While any problems resulting from osteoporosis cannot be reversed, early awareness can stop the advancement of bone thinning that leads to such unhappy results.

Edelson, assistant professor of medicine in the Division of Endocrinology at Wayne State University in Detroit, trained at Henry Ford Hospital. "Henry Ford has one of the premier bone and min-

eral teaching centers in the U.S.," he said, explaining how he got interested in osteoporosis.

"I think there has been an increase in public awareness the last three years, due to a push toward women's health," Edelson said.

He recommends women who are perimenopausal (around the time of menopause) have their bone density tested, to help determine whether they should be put on estrogen. It is the loss of estrogen at menopause that causes bone thinning. An alternate drug, salmon calcitonin, is available by injection for women who have breast cancer or a first-degree family member with breast cancer.

He also believes women who

have gone through the menopause and already are taking estrogen should have their bones scanned. This can be indicative of whether their estrogen dosage is correct, or needs to be changed.

High risk women

Who is at risk for osteoporosis? Caucasian and Asian women; thin, frail body types; smokers; heavy consumers of alcohol; excess coffee drinkers (more than three cups a day); women with low-calcium diets; and women who are relatively inactive. Exercise helps prevent osteoporosis, according to Edelson.

"Bone density at one particular age, depending on sex, gives you an idea of risk of fracture," he

said. If there is a low reading on bone mass measurement, it may be checked again over a period of time.

"A lot of women already have osteoporosis. It's impossible to give back whatever bone has been lost, but you can stabilize the condition," he said.

A program "Menopause and Osteoporosis" will be presented as "an educational highlight" by the City of Southfield's Community Education Department from 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, and repeated on Tuesday, April 27, at a location to be announced. Speakers will be Dr. Edelson and Dr. Rudi Ansbacher. Admission is \$6. To register, call 746-8700.

Husband quits his medication



RENEE MAHLER

Q. My husband was taking medication for high blood pressure. At his last physical the blood pressure has gone down and now he says he doesn't have to take any more pills. He refuses to go back to the doctor because he "feels fine now" but I have heard that he should really keep taking the pills. He reads your column so maybe you can advise him.

A. High blood pressure is a very serious disease that can show no obvious symptoms and can attack an otherwise healthy person. Unfortunately many people believe that if their blood pressure is brought down within a normal range, they do not have to continue medications or seeing their physician. While the amount of the medication dosage may be reduced over time, most people suffering from this disease must take their medicine for the rest of their lives. High blood pressure can lead to some very serious illnesses such as heart disease, kidney failure and stroke. By taking the proper medicines and by checking with your doctor, you can reduce the risk of having these problems. The National Institute on Ag-

ing offers the following suggestions to help control high blood pressure: take your medications and check regularly with your doctor, try to take your medicine at the same time each day, do not double up on doses if you miss one day — without consulting with your doctor, reduce your weight and salt intake, some exercise may be helpful but only with your doctor's recommendations, and do not substitute these actions for your drugs unless your doctor recommends that you do.

Q. My 87-year-old father has had his leg amputated. He seems very depressed and my mother is having a difficult time not only with his depression but her own fears. Is there any kind of group they could attend that would help them through this initial rough time?

A. Botsford General Hospital has an Amputee Support Group that meets monthly, at the hospital, which is at 2850 Grand River, Farmington Hills.

In addition, Botsford Hospital offers a variety of support groups including Adult Children of Alcoholics, Alcoholics Anonymous, Alzheimer's Support Groups, Diabetes Support Group, Grief Support Group, Healthy Heart Club, and a group led by the Michigan Closed Head Injury Alliance.

There is no charge for any of the support groups.

There is also a Stroke Club and Tinnitus Hearing Support Group among others.

There is no charge for any of the support groups. Family members or friends are also welcome to attend any of these meetings. For more information and a total list of the support groups offered call the Community Relations Department of Botsford Hospital at

442-7986.

The office is open Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and the director of communications and admission at a Rochester Hills nursing facility. She is a former member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging.

To leave a message for Mahler, from a touch-tone phone, call 553-2047, Ext. 1859. Send your questions to her at the Observer & Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Celebrity fashion show is benefit for HAVEN

HAVEN, Oakland County's only shelter for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, will hold its annual winter fund-raiser, the "Promenade of Hope" celebrity fashion show Monday, Dec. 7, at the Troy Marriott.

The fashion show and gala to support HAVEN is co-chaired this year by Katie and Sam Valenti, Joyce and Bob Hart and Denise and Jim Lites. The event also features a silent auction of signed sports memorabilia.

Hosting the event are Lynn and Isiah Thomas, Diana Lewis of WXYZ-TV, Ken Calvert of WLLZ

and George Blaha of the Detroit Pistons. Birmingham boutique owners Linda Dresner and Carl Stern will provide elegant fashions to be modeled by such celebrities as Alan Trammel, Barry Sanders, Mike Cofer, Chris Spielman, Bob Probert, Steve Yzerman, Sergei Federov, Rich Fisher, Eli Zaret, Sherry Margolis, Krist Krueger, Mary Conway and Val Clark.

Tickets are \$150, which includes a cocktail reception, dinner and fashion show. All proceeds benefit HAVEN. For reservations call HAVEN at 334-1284.

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