

Attention, asthma sufferers

Botsford offers program to help youngsters with asthma

Cases of asthma are rising faster among children than any other age group.

An estimated 4.1 million children under the age of 18 suffer from asthma. One of the most common chronic diseases among children, asthma is to blame for most illness-related school absenteeism.

To help children and parents better understand asthma, Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills is offering a special session geared toward children as part of its asthma education program "Managing Asthma and Staying Healthy," or "M.A.S.H."

The three-week series of workshops titled "M.A.S.H. for Kids" is designed to provide children ages 6-12 and their parents, other caregivers, teachers and coaches with information on managing asthma.

"The good news is that most children can learn how to control their asthma and actively participate in sports," said registered nurse Sally Randall, health program coordinator.

"It's important, however, for parents to meet with their child's teacher and coaches to ensure their understanding of asthma symptoms, triggers and medications," she said.

"M.A.S.H. for Kids" includes discussions on topics concerning the causes of asthma attacks, asthma medications, the effects of allergies on asthma and exercising with asthma.

Children will be taught proper use of inhalers as well as the warning signs of an impending asthma attack.

"It's crucial for parents to understand their child's asthma and help carry out any prescribed asthma treatment," Randall said.

Research indicates that fatalities attributed to asthma are infrequent and most often preventable through medication.

Highest mortality rates are among children living in the inner city, especially African Americans and Hispanics. Children with recurring, severe asthma episodes who do not seek medication attention also have an increased mortality rate.

Early signs of asthma include wheezing, coughing after running or prolonged crying, and, or, excessive number of episodes of chest colds, bronchitis or pneumonia.

Approximately 75-80 percent of children with asthma suffer from allergies as well.

To register or for information, call Health Development Network at 477-6100.

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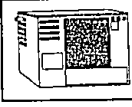
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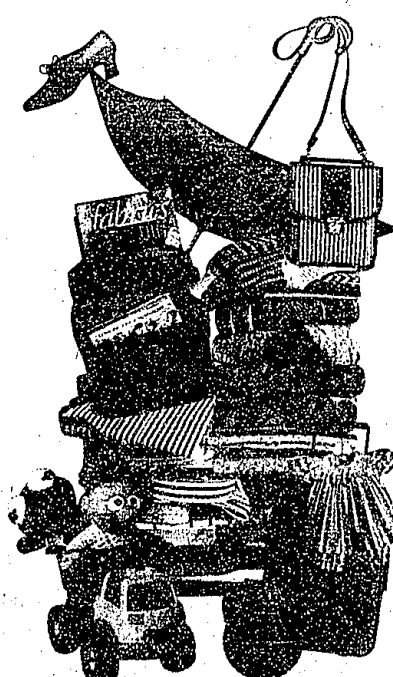
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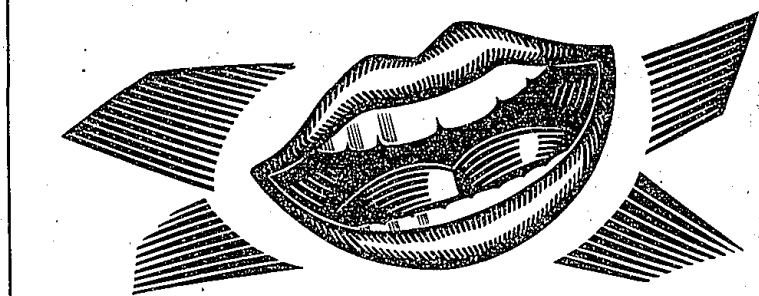
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