



## HEALTHY LIVING

Healthy Living spotlights Oakland County-related health and medical news and information. To submit information write: Healthy Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009. Fax: (810) 644-1314. Email: obrienm@eoonline.com.

## LECTURES & TALKS

### MANAGING STRESS

"Manage Your Life to Stay in Harmony With Your Heart" is being offered to individuals with heart disease and their families at Botsford General Hospital, 28050 Grand River, Farmington Hills. The four-week series begins at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2. The fee is \$20 and pre-registration is required. For information, call (810) 477-6100.

### AIDS EDUCATION

AIDS education classes, a one-hour class that meets state requirements for a marriage license, is being offered to engaged couples at Royal Oak's William Beaumont Hospital on April 3 and April 16 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The class will be held in classroom 1 at the hospital's administration building at 3601 W. 13 Mile in Royal Oak. The class is \$20 per person or \$30 per couple. To register, call 1 (800) 633-7377.

### CHILD CPR CLASS

William Beaumont Hospital is offering one-session child and infant CPR classes for parents, grandparents and caretakers of young children. Classes will be held from 6:30-9:30 p.m. April 3, 17 and 24 in classrooms C and D of the Beaumont Health Center, 746 Purdy in Birmingham. Another class will be held from 6:30-9:30 p.m. April 30 in classrooms J and K of William Beaumont Hospital in Troy.

### ARTHRITIS LECTURE

A free lecture on "Managing Arthritis With Exercise" featuring a Botsford physician and physical therapist will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9, at Botsford General Hospital, 28050 Grand River, Farmington Hills. For information, call (810) 477-6100. Brady Bunch or Dr. Earl Saltman, co-author of The New American Family - Tools for Strengthening Step Families, will discuss how to fight the statistics at a free community-wide program 7 p.m. April 10. The forum entitled Let's Talk Stepfamilies is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women and by Ward Presbyterian Church and Oakland Community College's Womencenter. It will be held in room J-308 on the Orchard Ridge Campus. For more information, call (810) 355-9936.

### LONG-TERM CARE

Providence Hospital in Southfield will offer a seminar on financing long-term care from 7-8 p.m. April 16 with long-term care insurance specialist Valerie Greenberg. There is no fee. For information call Valerie Greenberg at (810) 548-1086. To register call (800) 968-5595.

## ONGOING PROGRAMS

### KIDS' HEALTH

Southfield Pediatrics and the Franklin Racquet and Fitness Center in Southfield are joining forces and offering a weight management and fitness program called Keeping in Dynamite Shape (KIDS). Children ages 7 and older learn the importance of physical exercise, improved self-esteem and body image. To join, children should have had a physical exam within the previous year. They can then begin attending one-hour sessions at the Franklin Fitness Center once or twice a week. The sessions are offered Monday and Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$50 per month for once a week and \$70 a month for twice a week. For more information, call Heather Rich at (810) 358-0420.

### WELL CHILDREN

Oakland County Health Division's child health conferences provide free, ongoing well care for children from birth to school entry. Families who do not have an HMO or Medicaid may be eligible. Clinics are held at 14 locations throughout Oakland County. Services include heights and weights, physical examination, immunizations, vision, hearing and lab tests, growth and development screening and counseling. For more information, call (810) 558-1311 for northern Oakland County or (810) 424-7068 for southern Oakland County.

# HEALTH & FITNESS

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## New calendars help chart life's cycles

By BARB PERT TEMPLTON  
SPECIAL WRITER

Keeping track of the details of a monthly cycle - that in many women literally varies from week to week - is no easy task. Yet the details can be the key to good health.

Recording the ups and downs in a handy pocket calendar is one way to fight the battle. Personal Calendars, Inc. in West Bloomfield offers women that opportunity.

The creation of the Women's Calendar for tracking life cycles is the brainchild of high school friends Linda Chambo, of West Bloomfield and Janet Green, of Birmingham. Chambo and Green, both legal secretaries by day, met for dinner and started talking about their own experiences with hormones, the onset of menopause and sharing the monthly details accurately with their gynecologists.

The pair soon realized that the thing they had in common was an inability to keep track of their cycles in order to relay information to their doctors.

"I used to write these things on my desk calendar at work or on scraps of paper and I could never get them together to tell my doctor on a visit," said Chambo. Shortly thereafter, the duo decided a calendar could do the trick.

"I was having multiple periods and she was having thyroid problems. I had never kept track of so we said let's create a women's health calendar," recalled Chambo.

"We've been close for years and always wanted to do something and this just ended up evolving from a need," added

Green.

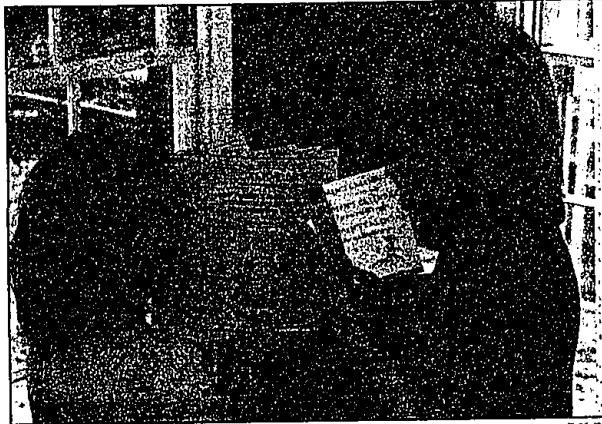
Spending hours researching what specific areas the calendar should address and completing a few marketing surveys on their own helped Chambo and Green decide on their final calendar package.

"We found out this could really be used by every woman from the time she starts her period, right through menopause and beyond," said Chambo. "We started out with a larger model but then decided to get the size down and keep it small so it could be kept in a briefcase or purse and be portable."

A pink stripe down the left side of a cover that shows a woman in pink riding a bike is the design Chambo and Green decided on for their first two calendars. Both Women's Calendars note that they are for "tracking life's cycles." The "For Every Woman" calendar has 12 categories for recording symptoms. Cycle, exercise, headaches and ovulation are among those areas listed where incidents can be recorded. In turn, each category has its own set of symptoms.

For headaches, one might record L for light, M for medium or MG for migraine. The "Peri-Menopausal Woman" calendar also has 12 categories and includes hot flashes, fatigue, emotions and memory problems.

The calendars are not dated so that each one is good for a full year from the date of purchase, said Chambo. The calendars were introduced by Green and Chambo at the Novi Women's International Show last March. Things have been



Keeping track: Janet Green (left) and Linda Chambo are trying to help women track their health with their calendar company.

moving along smoothly ever since.

Chambo reports mail-order sales are soaring as are the demand for the calendars in several local health and nutrition stores.

"The calendars are \$5 each and we had 8,000 printed in our first run," said Chambo. "It's been mostly word of mouth except for the last few months and we've sold nearly 2,000."

As the long-time friends prepare to take their creation to a national audience, they also

have new Personal Calendar designs in mind. The list may include a new mother addition and an in-vitro calendar.

"Someone recently asked me, 'Why don't you have one for men?'" said Green. "Well, I don't know that men are as interested in tracking things but they should be they have some of the same problems that we do."

The reaction from women utilizing the calendars has left no question about need.

"It's going well so far and the women are so wonderful and

supportive telling us it's something they've needed for a long time," said Chambo.

"It's exciting and we both feel just an unbelievable response from women," added Green.

To order calendars, send a check (payable to Personal Calendars, Inc.) or money order to: Personal Calendars, Inc., 7368 Barrington Ct., West Bloomfield, MI 48322. Include \$1.50 shipping and handling and 6-percent sales tax.

## Watch your back when doing spring gardening

Springtime gardeners are especially susceptible to back injuries, cautions Dexter Shurney, M.D., corporate medical director for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

"To risk serious pain when we jump into action after months of little or no exercise," said Shurney.

In the April issue of Living Healthy magazine published by the Blues, which goes to more than two-million households, doctors recommend gearing up with an exercise routine to keep your back flexible and strong.

In addition to exercising,

Shurney said you can reduce the odds of back pain occurring by taking some additional preventive steps:

- Avoid sudden changes in physical activity - like rushing to dig a new garden in a day - which can lead to aches and pains. Prepare your muscles and joints by warming up and stretching even before digging in a garden.

- Learn how to safely lift those bags of top soil and peat. Get a firm footing, with your feet apart. Stand close to the load and squat (don't bend at the waist). Take a deep breath and tighten

stomach muscles. Lift with your legs, which are a lot stronger than your back, bringing your back to a vertical position. Hold the load close to your body. If you must turn, do it with your feet, not by twisting your back. Set the load down again by squatting, not bending your back.

- When planting those petunias, sit on the ground and lean on one arm to ease stress on your back.

- Try to balance your loads. Whenever possible, carry two equal weight loads to prevent uneven stress of

back muscles.

- Never exercise or perform gardening tasks when you are experiencing back pain. See your doctor if back pain persists or worsens, or is accompanied by other symptoms such as numbness. Take some additional steps outside the garden to avoid back problems:

- Don't slouch as you walk or sit. When sitting, support your lower back with a small pillow.

- Avoid sleeping on a too-soft mattress. If you are prone to back pain, don't sleep on your stomach. Sleep

either on your back or on your side with knees slightly bent.

- Combine fashion sense with comfort. If you carry a shoulder bag, it's a good idea to use alternate shoulders. Wear proper footwear.

Shurney said many back problems can be treated without surgery. Minor back pain often responds to moist heat. Sometimes simple bed rest will help too.

Most of all, don't stop gardening. Experts recommend that Americans get involved in gardening or other light-to-moderate exercise.

## MHHA hospital performance report released

Michigan hospitals continue to improve delivery of health care services to their communities, according to the second Michigan Hospital Performance Report released earlier this month.

The report, a voluntary public service of the Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHHA), presents performance data for 161 Michigan community hospitals.

This year's report has been improved based, in part, on the suggestions of many of the more than 10,000 consumers who viewed the first Michigan Hospital Performance Report last year.

"With this report, Michigan consumers and purchasers are beginning to get a more complete picture of the state's health care delivery system," said MHHA President Spencer Johnson.

"This report shows the trends of the past 10 years during which Michigan hospitals have cut more than a day off the average length of stay for patients while increasing outpatient services."

The report shows each hospital's expected and actual performance on eight types of frequently performed surgeries.

The report shows expected and actual lengths of stay and mortality rates for seven of the eight types of cases, based on each hospital's unique patient

population. Obstetrical cases measure only C-section and vaginal births after C-section.

This year's report also includes health statistics from the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and information to help consumers understand how managed care is affecting health care.

"This year's report helps people understand the health problems facing the communities," Johnson said. "The MDCH statistics underscore the challenges we face in improving the health of Michigan residents."

The report, based on 1.3-million patient discharge records from 1995, shows:

- Overall, 82 percent of Michigan hospitals performed as well or better than expected on the cases measured

- That 91 percent of hospitals performed as well or better than expected for mortality rates

- That 74 percent performed as well or better than expected for length of stay

The report also notes that from 1985 to 1995:

- The average length of stay in Michigan hospitals has been reduced by one full day, from 7.3 days to 6.3 days

- Inpatient days - hospitals' most costly type of treatment - fell by 23 percent, from 9.159

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Spencer Johnson  
MHHA President

million to 7.044 million

- Outpatient visits increased 83.8 percent, from 10.42 million to 19.15 million

Last year's Michigan Hospital Performance Report was based on patient discharge records from 1994, while this year's report is based on records from 1995. Compared to last year's report, the new report found that Michigan hospitals maintained or improved their performance on 85 percent of the indicators measured.

"A primary objective of both reports is to help Michigan hospitals improve their performance," Johnson said. "With these positive trends over the last 10 years, and our second detailed report of clinical outcomes now public, we're affirming that hospitals are accountable to the communities they serve."

There is room for improve-

ment, though.

"The public release of appropriate health care usage and quality data still doesn't go far enough," said Johnson. "For the second straight year, hospitals are acting alone."

All-important segments of health care, including physicians, insurance companies, employers and others, must share their performance data with the public. Only then can comprehensive and significant health care system improvements be made."

Johnson praised the MDCH health status report: "The MDCH, under the leadership of James Haveman, has made a significant effort to inform the public on health status and risk factors through its publication of Critical Health Indicators."

The MHHA is exploring ways to add more information and variety of data to future reports. The next Michigan Hospital Performance Report is scheduled for release in March 1998.

The report is available for review at virtually all public libraries in the state and on the Internet (<http://www.mhha.org/performance2>).

Single copies are available for \$10 by writing to: MHHA, Michigan Hospital Performance Report, Volume Two, 6215 W. St. Joseph Highway, Lansing, MI 48917.

## Botsford clinic gets lipid grant

Botsford General Hospital's Lipid Clinic and Lipid Analysis Research Lab received \$70,000 in research and educational grants from three of the nation's top pharmaceutical firms: Bristol-Myers Squibb, Parke-Davis, a division of Warner-Lambert Co. and Merck & Co.

"Michigan, sadly, is among the states leading in heart disease deaths," said Robert Stone, D.O., chief of cardiology at the Farmington Hills hospital.

"We are proud that the Lipid Clinic and Lipid Analysis Research Lab will complement the range of Botsford's cardiac wellness, preventive and rehabilitation services," added Lipid clinic director James Maciejko, M.S., Ph.D.

The Lipid Clinic and Lipid Analysis Research Lab are two new components of the Botsford Cardiovascular Health Center. The donations go to research and education.

The Lipid Clinic identifies individuals at risk for cardiovascular disease including genetic predisposition assessment. The Lipid Analysis Research Lab is standardized by the Centers for Disease Control/National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute Lipid Standardization Program. It is the only lab with this designation in Michigan.