

Gardening answers a phone call away



RENEE MAHLER

ON AGING
Gardening, for many older adults, is a pleasurable and productive activity. It is an opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the garden and the greater outdoors. Sometimes professional help is needed when there are gardening questions that arise. Often that professional help is not readily available but there is good news. I have just found that Oakland County, in conjunction with the Michigan State University extension, has a toll-free garden information number that can help to answer all if not most of our gardening questions. Calls are answered by master gardeners and there is free information about lawns, trees, flowers or garden insects. They have informa-

tion on what to do if deer, rabbits, chipmunks or gophers are bothering your plants.
A Master Gardener 13-16 week program is also offered. The class meets once a week for four hours and is taught by gardening experts. There is a \$300 charge for the cost and 40 hours of volunteer work, at the zoo's gardens for example, must also be completed. For more information on general gardening and the Master Gardener course call toll free, 1-888-350-0900, ext. 80902, from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1-4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

During the summer everyone, especially older people, should be aware that there are heat related illnesses which can be fatal if not treated properly. People with chronic conditions that affect the body's natural heat regulating capacity should be especially careful. These conditions include heart disease, Parkin-

son's Disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and arteriosclerosis. People who take medications to correct cardiac or regular programs or depression should also be careful.

When the summer temperatures reach into the 90s you should try to limit your activities during the hottest part of the day, drink plenty of liquids but avoid alcohol, dress in lightweight, loose fitting natural fabrics, use a sun hat or umbrella if you go outside and always try to walk on the shady side of the street. Eating a well balanced diet is important but try to avoid cooking and eating hot, heavy, fatty foods. Fresh vegetables, salads and fruits are the best bet. Be sure however, that you refrigerate perishables and watch the expiration dates on your food. If you don't have air conditioning or a fan in your home try to go to an air-conditioned senior center, library, movie or shopping mall. Frequent cool showers or baths help also. Keep in

contact with your family and friends so they know you are managing to survive the hot weather.

G. My aunt just applied for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits. Does she have to wait two years to be eligible for Medicaid?

A. If your aunt is eligible for Medicaid she does not have to wait for two years in order to receive Medicaid benefits. Unlike Medicare, where there is a two-year waiting period, the moment your aunt qualifies for SSI her Medicaid benefits are effective simultaneously.

On Aging columnist Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and a former member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging. To leave a message for Maier, from a touch-tone phone, call (313)953-2047, mailbox 1469. Send your questions to her at The Eccentric! Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009.

Beaumont program has fitness guidelines for older adults

Healthy older adults can increase their stamina and promote overall wellness through a program of regular exercise recommended by a team of medical experts from William Beaumont Hospital.

To provide more information about fitness options for older adults, Beaumont presents an educational program, "Keeping Fit, Feeling Good." The program will be from 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, July 14, at Beaumont's Administration Building Auditorium, 3601 West Thirteen Mile Road, just west of Woodward in Royal Oak.

The program is free. You must register in advance by calling toll-free 1-800-633-7377. The program will feature presentations by four speakers, including Barry Franklin, Ph.D., director of Beaumont's Cardiac Rehabilitation and Exercise Laboratories; Michael Maddens, M.D., director of Beaumont's Division of Geriatric Medicine; Beaumont geriatrician Jack Yeates, M.D., and Beaumont cardiologist Seymour Gordon, M.D.

InterHealth service promotes healthy global traveling

Even if you don't drink the water, your health may be at risk every time you travel to a faraway place. To ensure good health is on your travel itinerary, experts at William Beaumont Hospital's InterHealth service use an on-line computer system to continuously track activity of communicable diseases around the world. The service provides the latest information specific to destinations in 240 countries on disease prevention and travel tips.

- Beaumont's InterHealth offers:
- Vaccinations against illness, depending on the destination, and an Official Certificate of Vaccination required for international travel.
 - General travel information, including health tips specific to older adults, pregnant women and children, or people with chronic medical conditions.
 - Customized written reports of each destination including advice on food, water and hygienic measures.
 - A list of suggested personal items, conventional first-aid materials and commonly needed medications.
 - Prescriptions for medications to prevent certain diseases, such as malaria and traveler's diarrhea.
 - A list of English-speaking physicians in any foreign country.
 - Information on how to get emergency services in any region.
 - A list of U.S. embassies and consulates in your travel destination.
 - Post-travel evaluation and treatment.

"Today's travelers are exposed to a wide variety of infectious agents and environmental stresses that may inconvenience or seriously threaten the health of a person who is unprepared," says Jeffrey Band, M.D., director, Beaumont InterHealth service. "Visiting InterHealth to learn about preventive health measures is an essential part of planning your trip." Band has extensive experience in international health concerns. Prior to his current position as director of InterHealth, Band spent several years at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. He is also a major contributor to the CDC booklet, "Health Information for International Travel." He has written more than 120 papers on infectious diseases and international medicine. InterHealth is on the Beaumont Royal Oak hospital campus. For more information or to schedule an InterHealth appointment, call (248)551-0498.

Area Agency on Aging holds seminar on driving

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B will roll its free seminar on driving awareness into Birmingham next week. "Senior Driving Awareness" will be 10-11:30 a.m. Thursday, July 16, at the Birmingham Area Senior Coordinating Center, 2121 Midvale Ave., Birmingham.

The program addresses the concerns of older adult drivers including driving performance, driving restrictions and contributing their voice to road project developments. July's meeting will feature a representative from the Michigan Department of Transportation. Following the presentation, older adults discuss their mobility questions and concerns. "Older drivers are most at risk per mile driven of a collision at around 70 years old," said Brenda Belter, program coordinator. "The only other group more at risk of a collision are those in the 25-year-old and younger category."


The programs are funded by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The Area Agency on Aging 1-B is a non-profit agency dedicated to maintaining the independence and dignity of older adults and persons with disabilities by supporting home care and community based services in six counties including Oakland.

Hospital seeks volunteers for study of dyspepsia medication

William Beaumont Hospital's Department of Gastroenterology in Royal Oak is seeking volunteers with symptoms of dyspepsia to participate in a research study of a medication. Dyspepsia includes one or a combination of the following symptoms: upper abdominal discomfort, bloating, heartburn, gas

pain, vomiting or nausea. Men and women age 18 and older are needed to participate in this study. All medical testing and medications provided to volunteers are free of charge. For more information, call the Beaumont Department of Gastroenterology at (248)551-4341.

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