

MEDICAL BRIEFS

Thinking "baby"?

Prospective and expectant parents as well as family members and support caregivers may tour the Miracle of Life Birthing Center at St. Mary Mercy Hospital, Livonia.

The tours are designed for adults and children ages 10 and older. Younger children are encouraged to attend a "Sibling Class," which introduces important child-care skills and addresses sibling issues. There is no charge for the tours.

Participants will meet at 6 p.m. in the Pavilion Lobby on the following dates:

- June 4, 12, 18, 26
- July 10, 16, 24, 30
- Aug. 7, 13, 21, 27
- Sept. 4, 10, 18, 24

Call the Marian Women's Center at (734) 655-1100 or (800) 494-1615 (out-of-town callers).

Ultimate survivor story

Sharing & Caring, financed by the JoAnn and Donald Petersen Foundation and the Beaumont Foundation, will host Joan Emde Memorial Speaker Dr. Jerri Nielsen, author of the New York Times No. 1 bestseller *Ice Bound* at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 14, at the Marriott at Centerpoint, 3333 Centerpoint Parkway, Pontiac.

Nielsen will share her harrowing ordeal of diagnosing and treating her own breast cancer while working for the National Science Foundation in Antarctica. A documentary of her ordeal aired on TV Jan. 25. Hers is "the ultimate survivor" story — a compelling testimony of her courage, resilience and immense gratitude to the many heroes who risked their lives to help save hers.

To register, call Beaumont Physician and Referral Service at (800) 633-7377.

Lyme disease

Lyme disease is a multi-system disorder caused by a tiny bacterium — *Borrelia burgdorferi* — transmitted to humans and animals mostly by infected ticks. The symptoms for Lyme disease patients are vast. They include flu-like feelings, fatigue, arthritis-like pain, muscle aches, headache and fever. Lyme disease can mimic more than 200 illnesses, such as multiple sclerosis, systemic lupus and ALS.

For further information, call (888) 784-LYME (5963).

Incontinence

Up to 15 million people suffer from incontinence in the United States, including 15-30 percent of all elderly patients and 50 percent of all nursing home residents. It affects women of all ages and is not an inevitable part of aging. Oakwood Healthcare System addresses this concern with its free seminar, *You Don't Have to Lose Control*, offered 6:30-7 p.m. at the following locations:

■ Tuesday, May 29 — Oakwood Annapolis Hospital, Wayne, Conference Rooms 1 and 2

■ Tuesday, June 5 — Oakwood Hospital and Medical Center — Dearborn, Kallman Auditorium

■ Wednesday, June 6 — Oakwood Seaway Hospital, Trenton, Conference Room

Dr. Veronica Mallet, a urogynecologist who focuses primarily on the management of women with urinary incontinence and female organ prolapse, will be the presenter. She will discuss bladder control diagnosis and treatment, including management techniques, state-of-the-art surgery and out-patient options. "Incontinence is not a natural occurrence, and it is in most cases treatable," she said.

The seminars are free. Participants must register in advance by calling (800) 643-WELL.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous avenues for you to offer noteworthy information including Medical Debates (opposing calendar events), Newsletters (appointments/news items in the medical field), and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies). We also welcome noteworthy stories on health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

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emPOWERment

Weight training makes women strong in mind and body



Pumping up: Class instructor Teresa Maguran (foreground) leads her class in a series of leg lunges using intermediate weights. Above, Deirdre Dolowy works on her arms and shoulders. She now has "definition" for the first time in her life.

By RENEE SKOGLUND
STAFF WRITER
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It's 7:30 p.m. on a cool, drizzly Tuesday evening and things are starting to heat up in Teresa Maguran's "Pump Up Toning" class for women at the Livonia YMCA. Within minutes the room is a blur of pumping arms and high-stepping knees as the 10 participants of varying ages rev up their heartbeats for a one-hour workout that combines step aerobics, weightlifting and yoga.

And it's all done to the thumping beat of some high-energy workout CD. There's no sweat in the oldies in this class.

"Keep those knees behind those toes," Maguran yells out as she leads the class in a series of leg lunges.

After the warm-up, the women start their weightlifting routine. They place dumbbells on their shoulders and began their squats. Next comes some side-way arm lifts using slightly lower weights. The strain shows.

"Come on. This is the last one, you guys," says Maguran. "We're stronger now. Don't squeeze the dumbbell too tight. Are you feeling this?"

"Yes!" answer the women.

Health benefits

Maguran's class combines the two types of exercises recommended by the National Osteoporosis Foundation for building and maintaining bone mass and density: Weight-bearing and resistance.

Weight-bearing exercises are those in which your bones and muscles work against gravity — jogging, walking, stair climbing, dancing and soccer. Resistance exercises, such as lifting free weights or using weight machines, use muscular strength to improve muscle mass and strengthen bone.

"A combination of cardiovascular and weight training is one of the biggest things I recommend to prevent and slow down the process of osteoporosis," said Dr. George Nicoloff, a family practitioner and sports medicine specialist who is the team physician for Stevenson High School in Livonia.

And forget about hefting 60-pound dumbbells, he said. "You can get just as much benefit by lifting less weights more times." The women in Maguran's class work with weights from three categories: 3, 5 and 8 pounds (light); 5, 8 and 10 pounds (intermediate); and 10, 12 and 15 pounds (advanced).

Dr. David P. Steinberg, a physiatrist at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ypsilanti, lists the benefits of a weightlifting program.

- Lower LDL (low-density lipoprotein, or "bad" cholesterol) and higher HDL (high-density lipopro-

tein, or "good" cholesterol).

- Reduced blood pressure.
- Improved glucose utilization, thus reducing the risk of diabetes.
- Possible protection against free radical damage to cells.

Muscles burn calories even at rest. "Muscles are efficient users of calories. If you simply diet you also lose muscle mass and bone, so you are actually losing the engines that burn calories," said Steinberg.

Keep in mind that muscle is denser than fat, so you may not lose weight from weight training alone. However, you can lose inches and redistribute your weight.

Melinda Hoerner of Livonia has been working out at the Livonia YMCA for over a year. She now lifts 20-pound free weights. Although her weight has remained fairly constant, her muscles mass has increased while her body fat has decreased.

"Even if you don't lose weight, your clothes fit better," she said. "You're more toned. And then there's how you feel, which is great."

Making a difference

Deirdre Dolowy, 31, of Redford used to think running and jogging was enough of a workout. "But this adds so much more," she said of Maguran's class.

A slim mother of three, Dolowy could barely lift weights or do sit-ups before joining the class several months ago. Now she's pumping iron with ease.

"Teresa is a great teacher. She motivates you. I can tell I physically look different. I used to have no shape to my arms and legs. I'm not dreading swimsuit season this year."

A year after enrolling in Maguran's class, 47-year-old Mary Nakamura of Livonia is strong enough to go rock climbing. She kiddingly boasts she now has "major big muscles."

Jean Medlen, 46, signed up for Maguran's class three weeks ago. After 35 years of ballet, her posture is straighter and her joints flexible. However, the Livonia resident's eight-hour-a-day desk job poses risks.

"My doctor tells me I should lift weights to prevent osteoporosis and to keep from getting the

round shoulders. Already I can feel I'm able to do the weights much easier," she said.

Medlen's daughter, Rachel, 16, also signed up for the class. She definitely notices the difference in her strength level. "My guy friends say, 'Boy, you have bigger muscles than me.'"

Some women are more prone to gain muscle weight than others, said Nicoloff. This is due to genetics and the interaction of several antibiotic hormones, including testosterone, insulin and the human growth factor. In general, women's bodies respond to weightlifting as men's do.

"Women have the potential to make similar strength gains as men but adjusted for the muscle mass differences," said Nicoloff.

Word of caution

Don't forget to warm up, say the experts. Five or 10 minutes of aerobic exercise followed by some muscle-specific stretches will increase your heart rate and body temperature, make your muscles more efficient, and limit the chance of injury.

The old adage "No pain, no gain" is simply not true when it comes to lifting weights. A little stiffness or soreness the first week or two after starting a program is expected; however, if you're in real pain reduce your weights and begin more slowly.

"There's no shame in starting with low weights," said Steinberg.

Choose exercises that work the body's large muscles, exercise opposite muscle groups, and exercise the largest muscles first and the smaller muscles last. Concentrate on the back, shoulders, torso and abdomen. Pay attention to form and learn to breathe properly. Inhale as you lower the weights and exhale as you lift.

"By exhaling you reduce the risk of increased blood pressure and tension on the back discs," said Steinberg.

Weight training places a demand on the heart. People with hypertension, heart disease, pre-existing back problems, hernias or severe osteoporosis may have medical restrictions. If you have any of these risk factors or if you're middle-aged or older, check with your doctor or health specialist before beginning a weight-training program.

Don't do weightlifting sporadically. Commit yourself to schedule or program. Three times a week, 30-45 minutes a session is fine. "Studies have shown that people who do weightlifting or resistance training rarely actually increase their risk of heart problems," said Steinberg. Just consider the number of couch potatoes who suffer heart attacks while snow-shoveling.

Finally, don't lift weights alone. Besides safety considerations, lifting weights with a partner is more fun. "If you don't enjoy it, you're not going to do it," said Nicoloff.

Please see EMPOWERMENT, D5



Making gains: Mary Nakamura focuses on her breathing and lifting. She now has enough upper body strength to go rock climbing.