

MEDICAL BRIEFS

Child seat check

Oakwood Healthcare System and the Westland Fire Department will sponsor a free Car Seat Safety Check 2-5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 11 at the Westland Fire Department, 36435 Ford Road, Westland. A certified technician will check seats for size, installation and possible recall. Oakwood Healthcare System will give a free booster seat to the first 60 persons who qualify. For more information, call Julie Brown at (313) 791-1488.

Remember:
 ■ Children 40-80 pounds should ride in a booster seat, so that the adult seat belt fits them correctly.
 ■ Infants should ride in a rear-facing position until they are 1 year old and weight 20 pounds or more.
 ■ Never use a car seat that has been involved in a crash. It may be structurally damaged, even though it looks fine.

Oakwood will offer "Booster Blitz" car seat checks 2-5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 15 and Wednesday, March 6 at the Dearborn Fire Department, 3750 Greenfield, Dearborn.

Brain food

Would you like to learn more easily at school or work? Is your brain a bit anemic? Then sign up for the two-session Feed the Brain for Learning class at Schoolcraft College 6:30-8 p.m. beginning Tuesday, Feb. 12.

Sandy Baumann, a biochemist and health educator, will discuss the role of protein and carbohydrates in keeping you alert and relaxed for learning, as well as the latest research on water, vitamins and minerals in supporting brain functions. She will offer simple tips for changing your diet so your brain is prepared to learn new information and tasks.

To register, call Schoolcraft College Continuing Education Department at (734) 462-4448 and ask for CES Class 4234, Sec. 917307. The cost is \$36 per person. The senior rate is \$28.80.

Urinary Incontinence

Half of all American women will experience incontinence at some point in their lives, according to the American Urological Association.

Doctors at Beaumont Hospital are recruiting women to test an experimental oral medication for reducing the number of stress incontinence episodes. Developed by Hoffmann-La Roche, Inc. the drug is being tested in women with stress urinary incontinence (SUI), the involuntary loss of urine caused by weak bladder muscles, and mixed urinary incontinence (MUI), the involuntary loss of urine as well as a strong urge to urinate.

Participants will be given either a placebo or the investigational drug at no charge and will be required to make nine hospital visits during a period of 17 weeks. The women will be asked to keep a urination diary and fill out questionnaires as well as undergo medical examinations and testing.

"Based on my experience treating urinary incontinence, I know it can be a difficult condition to talk about, much less seek treatment for," says Beaumont urologist Dr. Kenneth Peters, who is leading the research at the hospital. "This study is one of the many options we're able to offer at Beaumont for people with this condition."

Participants will be compensated for their participation. Call (248) 561-3355 for more information about this study.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous venues for you to offer newsworthy information including Medical Databook (upcoming calendar events), Medical Newsmakers (appointments/new hires in the medical field), and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies).

We also welcome newsworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

■ **CALL US:**
(734) 953-2128

■ **WRITE US:**
Observer & Eclectic Newspapers
(Specify Databook, Newsmakers or Briefs)
Attn: Renee Skoglund
36225 Schoolcraft Road
Livonia, MI 48150

■ **FAX US:**
(734) 951-7275

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Cabin Fever Work-Out

There's exercise equipment all around the house

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
SPECIAL WRITER

It's cold outside, the kids are taking a nap and you want a workout. Or, maybe you're at the office and you have a few extra minutes to burn some calories. Fitness experts say you don't have to go to a gym to whip your body into shape. You don't even need fitness equipment to make it happen. No matter where you are, there's always something you can do to exercise those muscles.

The first exercise is mental — convincing yourself that it can be done. Decide you're going to make a difference and begin.

"If you don't have a treadmill or a gym in your home, all you have to be is creative," explained Shawn Licata, manager of Cardiac Rehabilitation at Michigan Heart and Vascular Institute with St. Joseph Hospital.

"Your body doesn't know the difference," he added. "Any activity, rather than sitting in a chair and doing nothing, is on the plus side. The more sedentary we are, that's on the minus side."

Someone who weighs 160 pounds and walks up stairs for 10 minutes will burn about 175 calories, according to information provided by Reebok Instructor News, 1992.

Home sweet gym

Maybe you want to get something done and still get in shape. Try house cleaning or gardening. That 160-pound person is burning 49 calories every 10 minutes of gardening.

If you don't have knee problems, you can do step-ups using one step, said Jody Tomasic, director of ambulatory rehabilitation for Oakwood Healthcare System, Inc. Stand on one leg, raise the knee of

the other and hold. Do repetitions and switch to the other leg.

Set a reasonable goal that isn't too lofty. If you're overwhelmed, you're set yourself up for failure, Licata said. A good time frame is about three months.

"Write it down," he added. "I think too many people forget to follow up writing a goal down and looking at it periodically, like every day or two. A powerful thing to do is to share it with other people."

Friends and family will motivate you and you can motivate them. More importantly, Licata said, peer pressure, or the fear of being embarrassed, can be a helpful way for you to meet your goal. If your current activity rate is zero, don't get discouraged. You have to start somewhere.

Doing anything is better than just sitting. In fact, you burn as many calories sitting — about 16 every 10 minutes — as you would sleeping, according to

Reebok Instructor News. Get on your feet and a 150-pound person doing light activity will burn 24 calories every 10 minutes.

You can even find an exercise if you don't want to get out of bed. Lying on the mattress, do leg lifts on your stomach, each side and back.

When the exercise becomes too easy add weights, Tomasic said.

There's an exercise waiting in every room of the house. The kitchen pantry, for instance, can hold a lot more than just dinner. Try using those cans of soup to build muscles.

Gallons of milk, bags of pet food, and almost any other goods can be used for arm curls, Licata said. Or, lift those makeshift weights above your head to work the shoulder muscles, the arms and upper back.

The body responds

"Any amount of muscular work we ask our body to do can be helpful if we do it often enough to cause our body to change in order to make that activity easier," Licata said. "The magical thing about the physiology of the human body is that it adapts, but it doesn't adapt if you do it once a year."

Research shows that the physiological adaptation is the same no matter how old a person is. "The only difference is the time it takes your body to make those changes," Licata said.

Let's say you're in a doctor's office and the technician takes you to examining room where you wait some more. Use the time to strengthen your stomach muscles. Sit on the examining table and curl forward. Imagine how impressed your doctor

Please see CABIN FEVER, C7

Careful! Equipment alone is not the magic bullet

You're watching television and a beautiful man and woman, with perfectly sculpted bodies, are painlessly working an exercise machine that the commentator explains pulled them out of the doldrums of flab into a world of health and fitness.

Don't get too excited, said Shawn Licata, manager of Cardiac Rehabilitation at Michigan Heart and Vascular Institute with St. Joseph Hospital.

"Stay away from thinking that anything is the magic bullet. It's not the treadmill or the piece of exercise equipment that you're going to purchase on T.V. that's going to make you better, if you're not going to do it regularly. I don't care if you have a Gold's Gym in your house, it's not going to happen."

But a lot of people apparently believe it will. Since 1998 more than \$18 billion is spent annually on athletic and sports equipment, according to the U.S. Census

Please see CAREFUL, C7

Study calls for hospital accreditation review

ANN ARBOR — Hospital accreditation is a poor predictor of the quality of patient outcomes, according to a new study by two University of Michigan School of Public Health researchers.

A study by Professors John R. Griffith and Jeffrey A. Alexander, published in the January issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Quality Management in Health Care*, shows no relationship between Medicare-based measures of mortality and complications and the scores assigned to hospitals by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAHO).

Griffith and Alexander's study suggests a serious need to review the system that assures quality in 95 percent of U.S. acute care hospitals, and which is used for Medicare certification and often for state licensure.

The JCAHO system, in use for 50 years, almost exclusively uses structural and process measures and doesn't track newer, more direct performance measures such as the number of deaths or unexpected complications, the hospital's financial strength, or its ability to adapt to the latest treatment approaches.

Comparing scores

Griffith and Alexander examined Medicare outcomes by comparing JCAHO scores, submitted by JCAHO, against Medicare inpatient data prepared annually for The 100 Top Hospitals: Benchmarks for Success study by Solucient LLC.

According to Griffith and Alexander, Solucient mortality and complications indexing, adjusted for differences in the kinds of patients and cases treated, shows patients' chances of having serious adverse events, such as death or complications, are

about twice as great at the bottom 20 percent of hospitals as at the top 20 percent of hospitals. On other measures, the top quintile is about 1-1/2 times as good.

The Balanced Scorecard theory, increasingly popular among leading companies, suggests that a successful organization should achieve in a range of performance areas, including safety, stable financing, and efficiency, as well as in relations with its customers and workers, Griffith said.

Such an organization also would work at the kinds of things JCAHO criteria emphasize, such as staffing in care units and compliance with codes.

Improvement needed

Performance data like Solucient's suggest that America's hospitals need real improvement, Griffith

Please see STUDY, C8