

MEDICAL
BRIEFS

Eating disorders

Models and actresses such as Calista Flockhart on *Ally McBeal* may be influencing a whole new generation that being excessively thin is still in. Medical practitioners from Beaumont Hospital want to dispel that myth and educate the community the complex condition of eating disorders.

The hospital will offer *Listen to Your Body*, a two-part presentation about eating disorders and body image 7-9 p.m. Monday, Feb. 25 and Wednesday, Feb. 27 in the auditorium on the ground floor of the Administration Building, 3601 13 Mile Road, Royal Oak.

"About 8 million Americans suffer from anorexia or bulimia, many of them young men and women," says psychiatrist Dr. Alexander Buckwold, director of Beaumont's Eating Disorders program. "Participants who attend these programs will gain a deeper understanding of eating disorders and the resources available to help people with these conditions."

The eating disorders program uses a team approach involving nutritional rehabilitation, psychotherapy, maintenance and follow-up.

There is no charge to attend to presentation. Call (248) 551-2222 for more information.

Plastic surgery

Dr. Nathan Monihan of the University of Michigan's Center for Facial Plastic Surgery will discuss non-surgical and surgical interventions related to facial rejuvenation 7-8:30 p.m. at the center, 1990 Haggerty Road, Suite 111, Livonia.

The presentation is free, and refreshments will be served. Registration is required and limited to 10 individuals. Call (800) 943-3223 or (734) 432-7651.

Men's health fair

St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia will offer a Prostate Cancer Screening Day and Men's Health Fair 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 2.

The prostate screening provides a prostate exam by a physician, blood test to measure the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) level, and educational material.

The health fair will include blood tests to measure total cholesterol and HDL levels, blood pressure exam and exhibits.

Preregistration is requested by calling (734) 655-8940. A \$10 optional fee is payable at the door with proceeds towards the St. Mary Mercy Cancer Center. St. Mary Mercy Hospital is located at Five Mile and Levan Roads in Livonia.

Participants are asked to use the entrance at 14555 Levan Road. For additional information, please visit our Web site www.stmarymercy.org.

Lymphedema program

Oakwood Healthcare System now offers a specialized treatment program for lymphedema, a chronic swelling of an extremity or part of the body caused by a deficiency in the flow of lymph fluid from the area. Lymphedema is most often an effect of the surgical removal of the lymph nodes (i.e., with mastectomy or prostate surgery), or the destruction of extensive lymphatic pathways due to trauma, surgery or radiation.

For getting assistance in gaining a referral, call (313) 693-7760.

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:

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New procedure
eliminates
need for
hysterectomy

By DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
SPECIAL WRITER

Carol Maynard had menstrual bleeding for an entire month and was close to needing a transfusion when she met a doctor who performed a relatively new procedure that eliminated her need for a hysterectomy and dramatically cut her recovery time.

"I think more women would go to the doctor sooner if they thought there was an alternative to a hysterectomy," said Maynard, 52.

After weighing options, Maynard chose to have the thermal balloon procedure that has been used locally for about three years to treat functional menorrhagia.

"If I can do this for a patient and accomplish the required results, most times they can go back to work the next day," said Maynard's physician, Dr. Charles Cash, an obstetrician-gynecologist with Oakwood Healthcare System.

"This makes sense for patients and they need to know about it and decide if they want to pursue it," he added. "They can go on-line or talk to friends. Patients need information and education."

'This solved my problem without altering my body. My uterus is still there and intact and I haven't changed anything. I feel good about that. I guess the thought of a hysterectomy would make me feel old.'

— Carol Maynard
patient

There are some 650,000 hysterectomies done in the U.S. annually. About 25 percent of women, or 150,000 patients, who get hysterectomies need it to treat menorrhagia, which is caused by a build-up of the uterine lining that produces excessive blood loss during the menstrual cycle.

Cash defines excessive blood loss as having to use more than eight sanitary pads every day and menstruating for more than seven days.

The recovery time for hysterectomies can range from eight hours to five days in the hospital, with an additional two to six weeks before returning to regular activity.

Maynard went to the hospital at 6 a.m. and returned home at noon. Aside from cramping for a short time

after she left the hospital, she didn't experience any pain and could have returned to work the following day. "I haven't had any bleeding since," the Northville resident said. "I don't have to worry about where I'm going to be when the bleeding starts. I would go days where I could go through an overnight pad every hour. Once it was gone I didn't have to worry about anything."

Non-invasive

The procedure is a non-invasive technique that involves a Federal Drug Administration-approved balloon device that is inserted into the uterus, inflated and filled with heated sugar water. The water is warmed to 186 degrees Fahrenheit and cooks the

cells in the uterine lining.

Before the month-long period began, Maynard didn't have a period for nine months and she thought she wouldn't have one again. Then the bleeding began and wouldn't stop. By the time she saw Cash, Maynard was told she had lost half her blood.

Maynard had to stay off her job as a high school teacher at Wyandotte Public Schools for five weeks to rebuild her strength. Cash told her that if she had lost any more blood she would have needed a transfusion.

"A lot of other women I talked to had a lot of bleeding, but it stops," she said.

Cash first gave Maynard hormone pills, but a month later she had her period and was flowing somewhat heavy again. More importantly, she didn't want to take the hormones, because she felt they were artificial and she was worried they might cause cancer.

"When they did the procedure from that day on I had no bleeding," Maynard said. "For me it worked perfectly. Dr. Cash told me there was a chance it might not solve the problem, but I wanted to do it, because I didn't want to stay on the hormones. I don't trust them. I'd rather let nature do it."

Alternative

Maynard said she would have put off having a hysterectomy for at least a year if that was her only choice.

"I wouldn't want to have to go through the surgery and the thought of a hysterectomy," Maynard, 52, said. "This solved my problem without altering my body. My uterus is still there and intact and I haven't changed anything. I feel good about that. I guess the thought of a hysterectomy would make me feel old."

The thermal balloon procedure made sense to her, because it had fewer risks and a quicker recovery time.

"The procedure offers an alternative for women who don't want to undergo treatments such as hysterectomy, which can result in other problems," said Cash, adding that the thermal balloon insertion is considered an easier and less invasive procedure than other techniques.

The thermal balloon procedure is considered successful if the woman has normal or less periods.

"Eighty five percent have much lighter periods and a third of that 85 percent don't have any at all," Cash explained.

The thermal balloon technique isn't used to treat fibroid, adhesions or endometriosis, which is a normal uter-



PHOTO BY OAKWOOD HOSPITAL

Consulting: Patient Carol Maynard of Northville discusses the thermal balloon procedure with Dr. Charles Cash and nurse Kathleen Seligman.

Please see BALLOON, C7

Drug-coated stents
New fix for coronary artery disease

Michigan Heart and Vascular Institute of Saint Joseph Mercy Health System of Ann Arbor (SJMHS) has been named as one of 70 sites nationwide in a trial to evaluate a new treatment for patients with coronary artery disease.

The trial will evaluate the safety and effectiveness of a stent treated with Paclitaxel, a medication that may prevent the artery from closing back up.

Typically, a patient with coronary artery disease (buildup of plaque in the artery) is treated with angioplasty — a procedure where a balloon is inserted into the artery and a mesh-like tube, or stent, is placed in the artery to relieve the blockage. For 20-25 percent of these patients, the artery closes back up, a condition called restenosis, due to scar tissue

that grows through the mesh. Arteries can close back up within a year of angioplasty; for some patients it may occur in six months or even within one month.

The new procedure utilizes drug-coating technology. Patients would receive a stent treated with Paclitaxel, an antiproliferative drug that inhibits or reduces restenosis.

"The initial data looks promising," says Dr. Michael O'Donnell, a cardiologist with SJMHS. "Studies in the United States and Europe have shown very few patients to have restenosis two years following the implementation of the stent."

One difference about this study from other stent trials is that the Paclitaxel-coated stent will be used

on patients without prior intervention on narrowed arteries.

"Other advancements such as the recent vascular brachytherapy where the site is treated with a small amount of radiation were limited to patients who previously had stents. This new study will involve patients who have never been treated for coronary artery disease," adds Dr. O'Donnell.

If the coated stent proves successful, it could increase long-term survival rate and reduce the number of open-heart procedures. That, in effect, could reduce costs.

Saint Joseph Mercy Health System began enrolling patients Feb. 4. If you're interested in participating in this study, call (734) 712-2027.