

Rx Briefs

Lifesaving skills

The American Red Cross will host educational and training classes this summer to help people focus on preventing, preparing and responding to emergencies. **Standard First Aid** will be offered 6-10 p.m. at the Livonia Service Center, 36650 Five Mile, June 3 and June 10 or 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. June 7 and June 14. **Standard First Aid and Infant/Child CPR** will be offered 6-10 p.m. June 12, 19 and 26 at the Livonia location as well as 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. June 13, 20 and 27, or June 16, 23 and 30 from 6-10 p.m. For more information, visit www.semredcross.org.

Thyroid support

The Michigan Thyroid Support Group Meeting will begin 6:30 p.m. June 9 with speaker Dr. Kabisch starting at 7. The meeting will be held at the Plymouth Library, 223 S. Main St. For more information about the support group, contact Tacey Green at (734) 453-7945 or e-mail at mthyroid@yahoo.com.

Legacy lunch

The American Heart Association's Women's Legacy Luncheon is an opportunity for women to learn about their greatest health risk - heart disease. The program is slated to begin 5:30 a.m. June 3 at the Rita-Carlton in Dearborn. Educational workshops and guest speaker Dr. Pamela Peeke will address topics relating to heart disease. For information or tickets, call Norretta Wilson at (248) 827-4214 of the American Heart Association.

Weight reduction

Providence Medical Center of Livonia will offer a weight reduction program 3-5 p.m. or 6:30-8:30 p.m. July 24. The two-hour program combines hypnosis and behavior modification to help you lose weight without feeling deprived or denied. The first 45 minutes is a free orientation then if you feel comfortable you can pay a one-time fee of \$59 that includes the hypnosis session, booklet and home reinforcement audiotapes. The seminar will be held at 37595 Seven Mile Road, Livonia. No reservations required.

BMT forum

The eighth annual education forum "Ask the Experts" is scheduled 9:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Saturday, June 21, at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile Road, east of Farmington Road, Livonia. Topics include "Medical Perspectives Before, During and After Transplant," "Autologous Transplant," and "Allogeneic Transplant." Also covered will be "Caregiving 101: Practical Perspectives for Caregivers." Stewart Franke, BMT survivor and musician, will give the keynote address. Free program includes lunch and caregivers' guide. To register, call (800) 546-5266, (248) 358-1886 or e-mail nbm1ink@aol.com.

Fibromyalgia support

The Livonia CFS/Fibromyalgia support group meets at 7 p.m. at the Livonia Civic Center Library (32777 Five Mile Road). Muriel Wagner, Ph.D., a nutritionist will be this month's guest speaker. For more information call (248) 346-3164 or visit www.gocities.com/livonia/CFS/MS.



Camping RX

A prescription for fun, safe trip to the woods

BY KIMBERLY MORTSON
STAFF WRITER

If camping is on your agenda of things to do this summer, take some time to prepare your family for the adventures that lie ahead — including packing a first aid kit, knowing the areas you are traveling and being confident in your camping skills. A little forethought and planning will ensure a more enjoyable vacation for you and your family.

"By taking a few simple health precautions, however, you can protect yourself against disease, insect bites, dangerous wildlife, food and sun poisoning and other physical elements," said Dr. John Jovanovich, senior staff physician in the Division of Infectious Disease at Henry Ford Hospital.

Jovanovich says roughing it, so to speak, can be "fun and daring," but can also pose serious health risks for those who go unprepared.

First and foremost, organize a first aid kit. It's not necessary to spend hundreds of dollars on medical supplies that, in most cases, you aren't likely to need. A small and organized collection of items will go a long way in an emergency situation and can bide your time until you seek further medical treatment, if necessary.

The American Red Cross recommends six basics you should stock for your home in the event of a disaster or emergency situation. Each of the items should be given reasonable consideration for campers as well. Basics include water, food, first aid supplies, clothing/bedding, tools and emergency supplies and special items.

If you don't think you're going to have access to clean water or you're not interested in boiling or filtering, consider stocking water in plastic containers and having enough to consume two quarts per day (at least that much if you plan to be active). The higher the temperatures and the more physical you plan on being, the more water you should take (at least twice that). If someone in your party is pregnant, nursing, elderly or you have young children, you should consider taking even more water.

H2O WOES

When it comes to water, always assume the worst. Experts suggest you presume wilderness creeks and rivers are contaminated water sources due to domestic and wild animals. If in doubt, don't drink it. The simplest way to ensure your safety is to boil it. You can also pack a water filtering system (prices range from \$20-\$130).

"It might not taste that great, but it's filtered water," Jovanovich says.

The Red Cross recommends two quarts per person for consumption and two quarts for sanitation and food preparation.

The next item that is a necessity is a first aid kit for your car and camper/motor home if you have a vehicle that trailers one to the other. You might not remember to remove and replace a single kit from one vehicle to another, so it's better to be safe by creating a duplicate. Items should include: (1) adhesive bandages, various sizes; (2) 5-inch x 9-inch sterile dressing; (3) conforming roller gauze bandage; (4) triangular bandages; (5) 3 x 3 sterile gauze pads; (6) 2-4 x 4 sterile gauze pads; (7) roll 3-inch cohesive bandage; (8) germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer; (9) anti-wipe swipes; (10) pair large medical grade non-latex gloves; (11) adhesive tape; (12) tooth sticks; (13) first-aid kit ointment; cold pack; scissors (small, personal); and tweezers.

If you are taking medication, make sure you have

'By taking a few simple health precautions, however, you can protect yourself ...'

Dr. John Jovanovich
senior staff physician, Henry Ford Hospital

enough of your prescription to get you through your planned vacation time, in addition to a few extra pills in the event that your plans change. A list of the medications you are currently taking might be a good idea to pack away if you have to take a trip to the hospital unexpectedly.

Non-prescription drugs to include in your kit should be aspirin/nonaspirin pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid (upset stomach), Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center) and a laxative.

MOTHER NATURE

The allure of camping is largely the time you spend outdoors, and being outdoors means being exposed to natural elements such as rain, wind, the heat/cold and the sun. Sun exposure can lead to problems such as blistering and heat stroke, so packing a sunblock with an SPF over 15 is a good idea. Children should wear no less than SPF 45. If you plan on being in the water, you'll need to find a waterproof version or reapply the product before and after you get wet. A hat and the proper cotton clothing can help minimize your susceptibility to the sun.

Other items you might want to think about include a flashlight with extra batteries, waterproof container for matches, needle and thread, rain gear, sunglasses, a manual can opener, a map of the area you are camping, compass, whistle and insect repellent.

The woods are home to a wide variety of bugs (ticks, mosquitoes, bees/wasps) and plants (poison ivy, sumac, poison oak) that have the potential to be harmful as well as cause allergic reactions in individuals more sensitive to a sting, bite or the oil from a plant like poison ivy. Skin that comes in contact with any of these plants should be washed immediately with soap and water, then apply a hydrocortisone cream (1 percent) to the area as needed to minimize itching and blisters.

Jovanovich says DEET-based repellents work "most effectively against mosquitoes, bees, wasps and flies."

Separate sprays are available for skin and clothing application. And don't be shy when it comes to apply it ... use a generous amount," said the Henry Ford infect-

tious disease physician.

According to the Web site kidshealth.org, ticks carry a number of infections, including Lyme disease. It suggests children, adults and pets be checked regularly for the insects, who have a tendency to burrow into the skin in areas such as the groin, behind the ears and under the arms. The Internet has a wealth of information about Lyme disease and color images of what a bite mark looks like a few days after infection.

While spontaneity sounds great, you should be more inclined to put safety first. The suggestions from Jovanovich and the American Red Cross may sound time-consuming, but in the long run using good judgment and common sense should be your first plans of action. Have a happy and safe camping season.

Taking care of some common summer ailments

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) introduces its summer tips series for consumers.

The summer series addresses frequently asked questions regarding poison ivy, oak, and sumac; sunburn and sunscreen; and insect bites.

APhA urges consumers to talk with their pharmacists regarding these common summer ailments. While pharmacists are the health profession's medication experts, they also have knowledge about how to treat everyday problems. Read up on how to identify, treat and prevent poison ivy, sunburn and insect bites. If you have additional questions, ask your pharmacist.

POISON IVY, OAK, SUMAC

This tipsheet helps consumers first learn how to distinguish poison ivy from other green, leafy plants and geographically identifies the target areas of growth among poison ivy, oak and sumac.

The tipsheet also addresses what to do if you think you've come in contact with poison ivy, how poison ivy spreads from one area of the body to another, and how to prevent it from occurring at the start. For more information, go to www.aphanet.org/lead/Poisonivy_QA.pdf.

SUNSCREEN AND SUNBURN

This tipsheet identifies three types of UV radiation consumers should know. In addition, consumers can read up on the difference between sunscreen and sunblock, how to properly apply sunscreen, how to properly treat sunburn, and the facts about SPF. Visit www.aphanet.org/lead/Sunburn_QA.pdf.

INSECT BITES

The tipsheet highlights the symptoms of insect and tick bites and how to distinguish between insect bites and rashes. The tipsheet also addresses the benefits of insect repellent, what active ingredient to look for in repellent products, and when it's time to consult a health professional. Visit www.aphanet.org/lead/Insect_QA.pdf.

For additional information visit APhA's consumer Web site at www.pharmacyandyou.org



Change your oil and you can change your health

We know that vehicles run more smoothly when we change the engine oil. Now scientists are finding that changing the oils we put into our body changes the health of our hearts, arteries, digestive tracts and immune systems. Switching from omega-6 oils like corn oil, safflower oil, peanut oil, soybean oil and sunflower oil to omega-3 oils like carotol oil, walnut oil, fish oil (in the form of fatty fish or capsules) and flax oil can dramatically reduce arthritis pain, high cholesterol, triglycerides and blood clots. Omega-3 oils also help fight cancer and soothe the digestive system.



Healthy Living

Sandy Baumann

internal medicine at Wayne State University; omega-3 oil enhances heart health in three ways:

- By lowering triglycerides in the blood
- By raising levels of HDL, which is "healthy cholesterol"

■ By reducing risk for blood clots that cause heart attacks and strokes

Omega-3 oil acts like a natural blood thinner. It makes blood platelets less sticky, so they don't form clots to block narrowed arteries. Omega-3 oil also decreases the production of fibrinogen, which is another material found in clots. Dr. Maciejko indicated that omega-3 oil will also lower total cholesterol in persons who have high triglycerides, but it doesn't lower LDL — often remembered as "bad cholesterol." Fortunately, olive oil (a monounsaturated oil) lowers LDL, because it contains squalene, whose effects on high cholesterol have been reported in the *Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* (Vol 36: 422-7, 1996).

In his book *The Omega Plan*, Dr. Artemis Simopoulos indicates that omega-3 oils stabilize the heartbeat to prevent

arrhythmia, which is uncontrolled beating that shuts off circulation to the heart and vital organs. These oils also help patients recover from heart attacks. The OARIT study in England showed that men given omega-3 fat, in the form of fatty fish or omega-3 oil in capsules, had a 29 percent lower death rate after heart attack compared to those given either a high-fiber diet or one high in omega-6 oils. Other benefits of changing your oil to omega-3 include help for cancer, arthritis pain and more.

In a French study, women who had low amounts of omega-3 fat in their breast tissue were five times more likely to have the disease spread to other parts