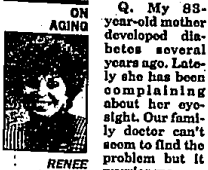


Eyes should be tested each year



ON AGING
RENEE MAHLER
 Q. My 88-year-old mother developed diabetes several years ago. Lately she has been complaining about her eyesight. Our family doctor can't seem to find the problem but it worries me.
 A. Diabetes definitely can affect the eyesight. The National Eye Institute recommends that all people with diabetes, regardless of age, have their eyes examined annually by an ophthalmologist. An ophthalmologist is a physician who specializes in treating the eye and diseases of the eye. A serious disease that older adults are at risk of developing is diabetic retinopathy. This can occur without warning and it causes damage to the small blood vessels in the retina. It is wise to have the eyes checked for this, and should treatment be required, the doctors often use a type of laser surgery which is successful in more than 90 percent of the cases. If this or any other serious eye ailment is left untreated, blindness can result.
 Q. I don't have a question, I have a complaint. I am 84 years old. My eyesight is not too good and I have arthritis in my

hands. Why do they put those childproof caps on drugs and why is the writing so small that no one could possibly read it?
 A. You have a legitimate complaint and you are not the only person I have heard complain about the problem of opening medicinal containers or the difficulty people have in reading the instructions. If you are talking about prescription drugs you can ask your pharmacist not to put your prescription in containers that have those childproof caps. You also can ask the pharmacist to type or print out the instructions in a larger print and on a separate piece of paper. Over-the-counter drugs present a different problem. Some of them do come with two types of caps but most do have unreadably small printed instructions. All of these problems have been brought to the attention of the drug manufacturers but so far acceptable action has not been taken. What needs to be done is for people to be heard. Start a petition, write a letter to these companies, write your congressman or senator. If you cannot read instructions you may be in potential danger, if you can't get the top off the bottle or jar the medication certainly will not do any good. What is needed is action. If enough people express their views we will probably see a change in the packaging of medi-

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cines which will be helpful to everyone.
 One of the best friends any older adult can have is a good pharmacist. He or she can help you understand all the medicines you take whether they are by prescription or over the counter. Most pharmacists keep a record of your medications and they will be able to tell if it is safe for you to take combinations of medicines. They also can help you understand medical instructions and explain labeling.
 You should not hesitate to ask your pharmacist about your prescriptions. He or she can clarify how and when you should take your medication. If there might be any side effects, if a refill is prescribed, what foods or other drugs you should or should not take while taking a particular medication, and if you should drive while taking it or refrain from any type of alcohol. The pharmacist also can tell you if the medication should be refrigerated or not.
 Take the time to talk with your pharmacist. If necessary ask to have your instructions written

out. Medications can be harmful. It is important to understand just what you are taking and how to take it. It can make the difference between getting better and getting sicker.

Renee Mahler is a gerontologist and the director of communications and admission at a Rochester Hills nursing facility. She is a former member of the Michigan State Commission on Services to the Aging.
 To leave a message for Mahler, from a touch-tone phone, call 953-2047, Ext. 1869. Send your questions to her at the Observer & Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Class accents thinking trim

Think Trim, an alternative to dieting, will be presented 7:30-9:30 p.m. Monday at The Community House, 380 S. Bates, Birmingham.
 Fee for the class is \$14. For more information or to register, call The Community House at 644-5832.
 In the class, Think Trim participants learn how to reduce self-defeating behaviors and control inner battles over food. The emphasis is on learning how to think trim and stay trim.

Beaumont to study high blood pressure

William Beaumont Hospital's Division of Preventive and Nutritional Medicine in Birmingham is seeking volunteers with high blood pressure for two research studies of blood pressure medications.
 One of the research studies combines a low-sodium diet with a new drug to lower blood pressure.
 A second research study compares two different blood pressure medications.
 For more information on these research studies or to volunteer, call Beaumont's Division of Preventive and Nutritional Medicine at 645-8158.

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Attention Students!

If you're looking for a summer job, place your free ad today.

On Monday, June 14, Thursday, June 17 and Monday, June 21, we will publish free ads of a maximum 5 lines for students looking for employment.
 Explain what kind of job you're looking for and what experience you've had.
Attention Employers!
 Check our classified section on the June 14, 17, and June 21 for that teen you need to work for you this summer.

Call 591-0900 or 644-1070 today and place your free five-line ad.

This newspaper hereby offers the opportunity for young persons seeking employment to list their first names only and skill, however we assume no responsibility for the nature of jobs offered or negotiations between applicants and prospective employers. These are the responsibility of the parties involved.

Observer & Eccentric

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