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Someone you can count on.<sup>SM</sup>

## Stress from page 1A

tion, can appear to be something else.

"You have to ask more questions sometimes in order to find out that stress is at the bottom of a patient's problems," McKinney said. "That's something a doctor has to learn."

And doctors, nurses and other health professionals should well know about stress, because they are often its first victims and suffer the worst.

"My background was in mental health, and I would see people with clinical depression who really couldn't help themselves," said Margo Gorchow, an administrator with Botsford Hospital who has spent much of her career treating and teaching about stress-related mental health issues.

"For a long time mental health was not really talked about as a public health issue, and that's changed," Gorchow said.

And Gorchow, a single mother who has balanced career and parenting, found that stress doesn't respect medical expertise.

"Stress management is a way of coping with change," she said. "And it's also a control issue. When you have people who have health problems, marital problems like divorce or becoming a widow, or problems at work, they feel they have no control."

Recent, sometimes dramatic

**You have to ask more questions sometimes in order to find out that stress is at the bottom of a patient's problems.**

*Dr. Max McKinney*

changes in the health-care field, coupled with the already present stress of sometimes dealing in immediate life-or-death situations, have made it all the more stressful.

And recent medical research suggests that high anxiety can increase the risk of heart disease and increase the risk of sudden death to two or three times that of cigarette smoking.

Although most people seek help for stress-related problems before they become too serious, they can be debilitating if left unchecked.

"I see a lot of people who are insecure and are not feeling as much in control," said Marc R. Hirsch, a psychologist who trains Botsford Hospital medical staff in recognizing and treating stress.

"In the serious cases, most often the people don't recognize the problem until they are barely functioning. They have difficulties with their families and don't realize why."

Although there are several measures people can take to avoid or relieve stress, such as an improved diet and regular exercise, the key is knowing that stress is what ails you.

"Know yourself, that's the key," Gorchow said. "You have to be able to look ahead a little in your life and not get into an entrenched pattern. You have to avoid doing things that are self-defeating."

And not dealing with stress can bring on anxiety, tension, anger, irritability, depression and physical symptoms that can lead to cardiovascular and immune disorders, and even suicide.

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by Herbert M. Gardner, D.D.S. & Martha P. Zinderman, R.H., D.D.S.



### ROOT CAUSES OF PAIN

In the event that a tooth is infected or abscessed, the dentist will likely recommend root canal treatment as a means of saving the tooth. Despite its popular reputation, root canal treatment is not painful. Root canal therapy puts an end to the pain by removing the pulp that lies beneath the crown of the tooth and extends down (root) canals into the roots. Once the soft tissue is removed, the tooth is cleaned, medicated, and filled with a rubberlike material when all traces of infection have disappeared. The affected tooth may then be fitted with a post and crown to render it structurally sound.

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P.S. The specialty in which pulp damage and pulp death are treated is called endodontics.

**SPREADING THE WORD**

The nutrient folic acid carries the potential to significantly reduce birth defects of the spine and brain, yet relatively few women realize folic acid's importance. According to a recent random telephone survey of 2,000 women, only half the women of childbearing age have ever heard of folic acid. Only 6 percent of those surveyed know what it does. And, only 10 percent of the survey sample realize that the U.S. Public Health Service recommends that any woman who can get pregnant should consume at least 0.4 milligrams of folic acid a day. Folic acid is available as part of a multivitamin supplement, but only 28% of the women in the survey took one daily. Folic acid is crucial in the earliest steps after conception, before most women realize that they are pregnant.

The recent discovery highlights the need to monitor your diet no matter how busy your lifestyle, especially in the months preceding conception if you are considering becoming pregnant. For those who prefer to go straight to the source, foods that contain folic acid are: cereals, cantaloupe, beans, whole wheat and dark rye flour.

P.S. Studies show that folic acid can prevent 50% to 80% of such birth defects as spine bifida and anencephaly (absence of a major portion of the brain and skull).

For more health and diet advice, call 228-8800. My office is conveniently located at 19501 W. 12 Mile Road in Southfield.



**James Smith, D.M.D.**