

HEALTH News

A positive attitude helps



FLORINE MARK

TALK TO THE MIRROR
This Friday we celebrate the most romantic day of the year — Valentine's Day. In honor of this special day, I would like to share the following story.

Mike and Diane were an ordinary couple. Like any ordinary couple, they struggled to make ends meet and to do the right things for their children.

They were ordinary in yet another way — they had their squabbles. Much of their conversation concerned what was wrong in their marriage and who was to blame.

Until one Valentine's Day when a most extraordinary event took place. "You know, Diane, I've got this chest of drawers that miraculously stays full of clean socks," Mike said. "I want to thank you for filling them all these years."

Diane stared at her husband over the top of her glasses. "What do you want, Mike?"

"Nothing. I just want you to know I appreciate all you do."

A few days later Mike said, "Diane, thank you for recording so many correct check numbers in the ledger this month. You put down the right number 15 out of 16 times. That's a record."

Disbelieving what she had heard, Diane looked up from her mending. "Mike, you're always complaining about my recording the wrong check numbers. Why stop now?"

"No reason. I just wanted you to know I appreciate the effort you're making," Mike continued.

The next day while Diane was

at the grocery store, she glanced at her checkbook to confirm that she had put down the right check number. "Why do I suddenly care about those dumb check numbers?" she asked herself.

Mike's new behavior continued. "Diane, that was a great dinner," he said one evening. "I appreciate all your effort. Why the past 15 years I'll bet you've prepared over 14,000 meals for me and the kids."

Over the weeks, Mike continued to focus on the positive and Diane grew more accustomed to Mike's new attitude.

Diane's step became lighter, her self-confidence higher and once in a while she hummed. She also didn't seem to have as many bad moods anymore.

"That could be the end of the story except one day another extraordinary event took place. This time it was Diane who spoke. 'Mike,' she said, 'I want to thank you for going to work and providing for us all these years. I don't think I've ever told you how much I appreciate it.'"

Mike and Diane's new outlook toward each other continued to flourish throughout the years and they shared a long, happy life together.

We can all learn from Mike and Diane. So much of what we do and how we react to situations depends on our attitude. By being positive, we can turn an ordinary situation into an extraordinary one.

Why not try being positive about everything for one week. I'm sure you will notice a tremendous difference in your relationships, your job and your life.

I would like to hear from you! Submit your health and nutrition questions "Talk to the Mirror," WW Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2974 or fax: (810) 553-7106.

Children face heart disease risk, too



DR. KEITH LEVICK

Heart disease in children? In your mind, picture Tiger Stadium filled to capacity on opening day. Also, picture other baseball stadiums in the country filled to capacity on the same day.

Those people represent the number of Americans who die each year from heart disease, some 900,000 people. More than one in five Americans suffer some form of cardiovascular disease (CVD). Clearly, we need to be concerned.

This is the most powerful country in the world. We've put people on the moon, enjoy the pleasures of great technology and yet lose thousands of people every year from the number one killer in America — heart disease.

Many of you may be thinking,

"Heart disease is something I'll worry about when I get older." This belief could very well land you in the emergency room clutching your chest.

A definite relationship exists between children's health and adult health. Results from the Bogalusa Heart Study, a comprehensive study that tracked 5,000 children in Bogalusa, La., for 12 years, revealed among other things, the cardiovascular risk factors (behaviors that contribute to heart disease) have origins in childhood. Specifically, fat deposits were found in 3-year-old aortas and in teenagers' coronary arteries.

Still not convinced we need to worry about our children's cardiovascular health? Consider the following:

- Approximately 1 million Americans age 15 and older have a disability resulting from a stroke.

- Four out of 10 Michigan children have high cholesterol levels.

- Two million Americans age 15 and older suffer from high

blood pressure.

- One out of four American children is obese.

- From 1965 to 1980, obesity rose 64 percent in children from 6-13 years and 39 percent for children 12-17 years of age.

- Two million 12-17 year olds are smokers.

- Every day, approximately 3,000 young people become smokers.

- Seventy-five percent of adult smokers started before age 18 and 90 percent began before the age 21.

- Approximately 50 percent of children do not engage in regular physical activity.

Identifiable risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking, obesity and the lack of exercise are associated with CVD. Since these behaviors are modifiable, heart disease can be prevented. It begins in the home with parents exhibiting healthy behaviors.

Children evaluate and model their parents' behavior every day. Simply stated, a parent's lifestyle often becomes the

roadmap of the child's life.

Since most children attend school, it becomes another place to teach children about CVD.

In fact, this week is Heart Awareness Week sponsored by the American Heart Association. School districts around the tri-county area are invited to participate in teaching children the dangers of CVD and some preventive strategies. For more information, call Kathy Roger at (810) 557-9511.

Preventing heart disease begins with educating our children.

When appropriate health behaviors are taught at home, in school and in the community, children will be equipped with the necessary skills to defend themselves against the nation's number-one killer.

Dr. Levick is a health psychologist and the director of The Center For Childhood Weight Management in Farmington Hills. He can be contacted at (810) 555-6771 or e-mail questions or suggestions at Klewick@aol.com.

OAC shows how exercise can improve health care

Last May, the U.S. Surgeon General's Office released its first-ever Report on Physical Activity and Health.

The report issued a warning to all Americans: "Lack of physical activity is detrimental to your health."

This is the inspiration for "Exercise is Healthcare" from the Oakland Athletic Club, 355 S. Woodward, Suite 290, in downtown Birmingham.

Noting that an estimated 250,000 Americans die prematurely due to lack of physical activity, the report compares sedentary living with smoking

one pack of cigarettes a day.

It has been proven that regular physical activity can help reduce the risk or control symptoms for a variety of diseases and degenerative conditions, ranging from cancer and heart disease to depression.

The Office of the Surgeon General has asked all involved in the health and fitness area to redouble the effort to get America moving toward healthier lifestyles. Participants in "Exercise is Healthcare" will receive:

- Free cholesterol and blood sugar level screenings.
- Free blood pressure check.

- Free body composition analysis.

- Free fitness consultations.

The Oakland Athletic Club has compiled a list of 10 simple ways for people to incorporate fitness and weight management into their daily routines:

1. Always eat a healthy breakfast.
2. Use the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
3. Park in the furthest parking spot.
4. Take a 10-minute stretch break at the office.
5. Get up 20 minutes early and do some basic calisthenics.

6. Take a 15-minute walk after dinner.

7. Play an active physical game with your children after you get home from work.

8. Do some abdominal exercise during commercials while watching TV.

9. Go on a brisk walk at lunch.
10. Drink eight to 10 glasses of water a day, and limit caffeine.

For more information, call Oakland Athletic Club fitness director Dana Mitchell at (810) 540-9596 or Pat Bagchi at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac, (810) 858-6662.

American Cancer Society needs local volunteer help

Don't let the winter blues get you down! A great way to feel productive during these cold months is to volunteer for the Oakland County-based American Cancer Society.

The following is a list of fun volunteer opportunities in the following areas: Cancer control, income, development, and discovery shops.

Cancer control

The goal of the Cancer Control Department at the American Cancer Society is to prevent cancer, save lives, and diminish suffering from cancer through research, education, advocacy, and service. The programs are only accomplished through the altruistic efforts of the many volunteers. Three needs in Cancer Control are currently:

- The Phone Center — Volunteers are needed to staff these lines in shifts from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Reach to Recovery — Reach to Recovery volunteers are women who have undergone treatment for breast cancer and are willing to serve as a listening and empathetic ear to those women awaiting cancer treatment.

- Speaker's Bureau — Volunteers are needed to educate groups on specific cancer-related topics. Specifically, speakers are needed to talk about kids and tobacco.

Income development
In order to fund its life-saving and enhancing programs, the American Cancer Society raises money through the generous contributions of individuals across the United States. The Income Development Department accomplishes this mainly through special events. The current volunteers needed for the Income Development Department are as follows:

- Special Event Assistance — There's Relay For Life. Light the Night Gala. The Babe Zaharias Golf Tournament. The Great American Lockup. ACS events can be anything from black-tie to blue jeans, silk to flannel. Volunteers are needed to work at these events in the spring, summer, and fall, and to help with the planning throughout the year.

- Office/Clerical Assistance — The largest fundraising event for the southeastern region of the American Cancer Society is coming on March 11 through 14, and your help is greatly needed. The Great American Lockup is an incredibly fun event that requires vast amounts of volunteer help to succeed.

Discovery shops
The American Cancer Society has two resale shops in the area: one in Farmington, the other in Sterling Heights. Both are looking for volunteers to help with inventory, retail sales, and general book-keeping for the shops. Individuals are needed for four hour shifts on weekdays or Saturdays.

To become involved in any of these, please call Suzanne, director of volunteerism and programs, at (810) 557-5353, Ext. 52 in Southfield.

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For complete details call Craig Weinstein
at 1-800-999-6726 ext. 7147.



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