



FLORINE MARK

Kindness is good for you, spreads

Every morning on my way to work, I am amazed at the lack of manners of drivers on the road. There are always people who face up alongside of you - then cut over at the last possible minute. But on the other hand, when you suddenly find yourself in a lane that ends not one of these drivers will return the favor.

With all of us under so much stress, it's no wonder violence on the road is on the rise. Next time you get behind the wheel, think about the following story.

It's a warm spring day in downtown Detroit. A woman in a purple Grand Am, loaded with children - not all of them hers - drives up to the toll booth at the Detroit/Windsor tunnel.

"I'm paying for myself, and for the six cars behind me," she says with a smile, handing over \$8.75.

One after another, the next six drivers arrive at the toll booth, dollars in hand, only to be told, "Some lady up ahead already paid your toll. Have a nice day!" Driver after driver was pleasantly surprised as they reached the booth. Many of them continued to spread other acts of kindness to others throughout the day.

One man put a coin into a stranger's meter just in time. Another person organized a group of people to clean up a run down house belonging to an elderly neighbor.

A teenage boy was shoveling his driveway when he decided to continue and do his neighbor's driveway too.

Remember, kindness can build on itself as much as violence can. They say you can't smile without cheering yourself up a little - likewise, you can't commit a random kindness without feeling as if your own troubles have been lightened if only because you reached out to another.

Also, you can't be a recipient of these acts without feeling a sudden rush of pleasure.

If you were one of those drivers who found your toll paid, who knows what you might have been inspired to do for someone else.

Gandhi once said, "It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing."

"You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result."

Like all changes in behavior, goodness begins with a single act. Let it be yours.

I would love to hear from you! Please submit your health and nutrition questions, or suggestions for upcoming articles, to: "Talk to the Mirror," Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2974, or fax: (810) 553-7106.

Mark is the President and CEO of the Weight Watchers Group, Inc., based in Farmington Hills. It is the largest Weight Watchers franchise in the country.

HEALTH & FITNESS

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Diabetes march Tuesday

Residents from across Michigan will participate in "Delegates for Diabetes on the March" at the state Capitol in Lansing on Tuesday, March 18.

Diabetes advocates will march to the Capitol advocating improved insurance coverage for state residents with diabetes, representatives from the Michigan local branch of the American Diabetes Association in Bingham Farms said.

Upon arrival at the Capitol, they'll meet with their state legislators to discuss the Diabetes Cost Reduction Act recently introduced in the House of Representatives and assigned to the House Insurance Committee - HB 4120, 4161, and 4360.

Explains American Diabetes Association volunteer Kim Madeleine, who co-chairs the government relations committee, "Our message to lawmakers is rather simple and straight forward."

Diabetes is a serious and costly health problem in Michigan. There is tremendous evidence that preventive treatment and appropriate self-management not only save lives, but money, she said.

However, most insurers in Michigan do not provide comprehensive coverage that

would pay for such cost-saving measures.

The legislation, also referred to as the Diabetes Cost Reduction Act, would ensure that insurers in Michigan provide coverage for diabetes supplies and education.

More than 570,000 state residents have diabetes, a disease that accounts for one of every seven health care dollars spent in Michigan.

"The advocacy program 'Delegates for Diabetes on the March' is co-sponsored by the American Diabetes Association, Michigan Affiliate and the Michigan Organization of Diabetes Educators."

Volunteers are invited to Lansing for a morning of information at the Lansing Center and in the afternoon they will march to the Capitol and meet with their legislators.

The morning forum will include addresses by the bill sponsors.

According to Martha Funnell, MS, RN, CDE, president of the American Diabetes Association, "Too often, people with diabetes lack access to health insurance training and supplies because their health insurance coverage does not provide for these necessary items."

In the Senate, Sen. John

Schwarz, MD (R-24th District) will sponsor the legislation and in the House, Rep. Kwame Kilpatrick (D-9th District) is sponsoring HB 4161; Rep. Beverly Hammett (R-56th District) is sponsoring HB 4360, and Rep. Rose Bogardus (D-47th District) is sponsoring HB 4120.

"Enactment of this legislation can improve the quality of life of Michigan residents with diabetes, while saving money for all of us who eventually pay for the treatment of the disease," Funnell added.

Diabetes is a serious disease that affects the body's ability to produce or respond to insulin, a hormone that allows blood sugar to enter the cells of the body and be used for energy.

Diabetes can lead to debilitating or fatal complications, such as blindness, kidney disease, heart disease, stroke and amputations. It is the fourth-leading cause of death by disease in the U.S. and has no cure. Diabetes claims the lives of 6,700 Michigan residents each year.

For more information about the "Delegates for Diabetes on the March" call Sally Spaid Norby at 1 (800) 342-2383.

Innovative pharmacists



Award winners: Mark Touchette (left) of Troy and David Wright of Plymouth, pharmacists at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, received the 1997 Innovative Pharmacy Practice Award from the Michigan Pharmacists Association at the association's annual convention and exposition Feb. 21 at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn.

Curable disorder can mimic panic attacks in women

Sinai Hospital reports a non-life threatening, but often debilitating, recurrent rapid heart rhythm produces symptoms easily confused with "panic attacks" - a misdiagnosis made twice as frequently in women. Recognition and appropriate treatment of the cardiac disorder can eliminate panic-like symptoms in 90 percent of cases.

These new findings are being reported in the March 10 issue of the American Medical Association journal "Archives of Internal Medicine" by a Wayne State University School of Medicine researcher, who is the senior member is Michael H. Lehmann, M.D., Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of the Arrhythmia Center at Sinai Hospital, Detroit. The lead author of the article is Timothy J. Lesmeier, M.D., currently at the Heart Institute of Spokane, Spokane, WA.

The researchers studied 107 patients (median age 40 years; 55 percent women) referred for electrophysiologic testing, a special heart catheterization procedure for rhythm problems.

This test proved that the patients

suffered from paroxysmal supraventricular tachycardia (PSVT) - a recurrent, non-life threatening heart rhythm disorder (typically 150-250 beats per minute) that often stops on its own after several seconds to minutes.

At the time of physician contact, however, the diagnosis of PSVT was made in only 48 (45 percent) of patients.

Among the 59 initially unrecognized cases of PSVT, a median of 3.3 years elapsed until the proper diagnosis was made. Prior to that time, symptoms in 92 (64 percent) of these unrecognized cases of PSVT were attributed by non-psychiatric physicians to "panic," "anxiety" or "stress" - a diagnostic error made twice as frequently in women vs. men. In fact, 12 percent of patients with unrecognized PSVT sought the care of a mental health professional because of their symptoms.

The potential for symptom overlap between PSVT and panic attack was striking. Of the 107 patients studied, two thirds had a PSVT episode frequency and symptom profile that met American Psychiatric Association

criteria for Panic Disorder. Following the electrophysiology test, PSVT was treated either by another catheterization-like procedure designed to completely eliminate the abnormality called "radiofrequency ablation," or by medication aimed at suppressing recurrences.

After a median 20 month follow-up period, 86 percent of patients were cured of their symptoms - including 91 percent of those whose symptoms were attributed to "panic," "anxiety" or "stress."

The fleeting nature and relative infrequency of PSVT episodes likely contributed to such initial misdiagnoses.

Even the traditional portable 24-hour electrocardiogram recorder succeeded in catching a PSVT episode in only 9 percent (6 of 64) patients having this test.

For more effective, the researchers found, were "event monitors" which detected PSVT in 47 percent (8 of 17) patients so tested. An event monitor is a lightweight electrocardiogram recording device that is typically worn (like a beeper or wrist

watch) over a 1-2 week period, and activated by the patient whenever he or she has palpitations or other symptoms.

Also potentially helpful is a subtle suggestive marker of a tendency toward PSVT, called a "delta wave," which sometimes may be evident on a standard electrocardiogram.

However, this diagnostically valuable clue was not initially recognized in over one third of the patients with this telltale electrocardiographic sign.

The study's findings should help physicians to avoid overlooking PSVT - a curable heart rhythm disorder - as the basis for recurrent "panic"-like symptoms, especially in women. Research is now needed to define the proportion of patients with panic attacks actually suffering from PSVT.

Sinai is a 598-bed hospital located in northwest Detroit, with 11 health centers and 35 medical offices in Wayne and Oakland counties.

Established by Detroit's Jewish community in 1953, Sinai serves patients throughout metropolitan Detroit.

HEALTHY LIVING

Healthy Living spotlights Oakland County-related health and medicine news and information.
To submit information write: Healthy Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009. Fax: (810) 644-1314. Email: obhltm@oeonline.com.

NUTRITION HEALTH FAIR
Crittendon Hospital's food and nutrition services department hopes to increase consumer awareness through their annual Nutrition Health Fair. This free event will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, March 20, 1101 University Drive, in Rochester Hills. The community is invited to sample a variety of healthy food, participate in games, contests and even win prizes. Staff from several hospital departments will be on hand to answer questions about exercise, food and stress management techniques. Cholesterol screening and management will be available for a small fee. Registration is not necessary. If you have question call (810) 652-5630.

KIDS' HEALTH
Southfield Pediatrics and the Franklin Racquet and Fitness Center in Southfield are joining forces and offering a unique weight management and fitness program called Keeping in Dynamic Shape (KIDS). Children ages seven

and older learn the importance of physical exercise, improved nutrition and body image. To join, children should have had a physical exam within the previous year. They can then begin attending one-hour sessions at the Franklin Fitness Center once or twice a week. The sessions are offered Monday and Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Cost is \$59 per month for once a week and \$70 a month for twice a week. For more information call Heather Rich at (810) 358-0420.

AUTO-IMMUNE WOMEN
Counselor Barbara Spivack will be facilitating an eight session therapy group to help women with auto-immune disorders develop a positive approach to life with chronic illness. Sessions will be held on Wednesday evening beginning March 19 at the Davis Counseling Center in Farmington Hills. There is a fee and pre-registration is required. For more information call (810) 553-8550.

PHARMACIST AWARDS
Mark Touchette of Troy and David Wright of Plymouth, pharmacists at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, received the 1997 Innovative Pharmacy Practice Award from the Michigan Pharmacists Association during the association's annual convention and exposition held Feb. 21 at the Hyatt

Regency in Dearborn.

TRAVEL MEDICINE
From Hepatitis A and Yellow Fever vaccines to personalized consultation on a traveler's specific itinerary, Crittendon Hospital in Rochester Hills will be able to help travelers maintain their health while traveling abroad through its Travel Medicine Program for business and pleasure travelers. The appointment will include immunizations for adults and children, personalized consultation and handouts based on the traveler's itinerary, certification of vaccinations approved by the World Health Organization and recommendations for a traveler's emergency kit. Traveler's should make an appointment for the program at least six weeks before departure. Call (810) 652-5203 for an appointment.

WELL CHILDREN
Oakland County Health Division's Child Health Conferences provide free, ongoing well care for children from birth to school entry. Families who do not have an HMO or Medicaid may be eligible. Clinics are held at 14 locations throughout Oakland County. Services include heights and weights, physical examination, immunizations, vision, hearing and lab tests, growth and

developmental screening and counseling. For more information call (810) 858-1311 for northern Oakland County or (810) 424-7056 for southern Oakland County.

HELP FOR PARKINSON'S
"Living With and Understanding Parkinson's," an intensive seven-week education program which discusses all aspects of self care and management of Parkinson's Disease, begins Wednesday, March 19, at Botsford General Hospital, 28050 Grand River, Farmington Hills. The fee is \$40 per couple and pre-registration is required. For information, call (810) 477-6100.

MANAGING STRESS
"Manage Your Life to Stay in Harmony With Your Heart" is being offered to individuals with heart disease and their families at Botsford General Hospital, 28050 Grand River, Farmington Hills. The four-week series begins at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2. The fee is \$20 and pre-registration is required. For information, call (810) 477-6100.

AQUATIC ARTHRITIS PROGRAM
The National Arthritis Foundation and the National YMCA have joined together with William Beaumont Hospital to offer a recreation water program for people with arthritis. The program is designed to supplement, not replace, a

prescribed regimen of therapeutic exercises. It is a series of gentle, recreational activities in the pool and is open to anyone with arthritis. Swimming ability is not necessary to participate. Your doctor's consent is required. The classes take place in the Beaumont's Rehabilitation Center, 746 Purdy in Birmingham. Classes will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. starting April 1 or on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30-3:30 p.m. starting April 14. The six-week program costs \$56. Call (810) 558-3700 for more information.

ARTHRITIS LECTURE
A free lecture on "Managing Arthritis With Exercise" featuring Botsford physician and physical therapist will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9, at Botsford General Hospital, 28050 Grand River, Farmington Hills. For information, call (810) 477-6100.

KIDNEY DISEASE
Learn all about urinary tract infections and kidney stone disease at a one-time lecture given by a urologist at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25, at Botsford General Hospital, 28050 Grand River, Farmington Hills. The fee is \$5. For information, call (810) 477-6100.

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