



Relax: These products from Carol Lewis Skin Care, 386 East Maple, Birmingham, may help perk you up when you're stuck in bed. They include a heart-shaped warm bag that helps relieve neck and shoulder pain, mosaic powder compacts to add some color to the face. (248) 642-1570.

Chase away the flu blues

Sometimes, the best cure for whatever ails you — especially if you have a cold or the flu — is bed rest. Here are some blankets, beverages, soups and books to help you get through a day spent under the covers.

If you're in the market for a new blanket, you might want to check out those made by Dakota with Malden Mills' Polarfleece fabric.

These blankets are very soft and come in a variety of colors. But what sets them apart is their thermal efficiency. In other words, they're lightweight and yet have a very high insulating value. According to tests conducted by U.S. Testing Inc., Polarfleece (which is 100 percent polyester) has a higher thermal efficiency than cashmere, acrylic, washable wool and thermal cotton.

Polarfleece bedding is available at Hudson's. Throws are regularly priced at about \$60 on up, and bed blankets start at about \$130 (for a twin), but they may be on sale. They were about half price the week after Christmas.

A hot cup of coffee or cocoa is nice to have when you're under the weather. Why not try a Marshall Field's Frango coffee or cocoa sampler? The coffee sampler includes caramel, pecan praline, mint chocolate and cappuccino flavored coffee, each in a 2-ounce bag. The cocoa sampler includes mint-chocolate, caramel, raspberry chocolate, and cappuccino chocolate flavored cocoa, each in a 2.5-ounce bag, \$12 at Hudson's.

Soup is also good to have when you're sick. For something different, you could try a gourmet soup mix, like the Frontier Soups carried by Jacobson's, or Canterbury Cuisine soup mixes, which I found at the Merchant of Vino, Birmingham. Frontier Soup's Connecticut Cottage Chicken Noodle soup makes six cups of soup, is ready in about 30 minutes and costs about \$6. Canterbury Cuisine's Chicken 'N Noodle Soup costs about \$4.50, serves 10.

Speaking of soup, what about a little "Chicken Soup for the Soul" (a New York Times #1 best seller) or any of the other books in the widely popular Chicken Soup series. Published by Health Communications Inc., the books are written by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and in some cases additional authors. The books are in paperback and cost about \$13 each.

Each of the books features 101 short, inspirational stories to, as the authors put it, "Open the hearts and minds of the spirit." Some of the stories are from celebrities.

If you prefer a good mystery, Mary Millington, a bookseller with Little Professor Book Store in Plymouth, recommends any of the "Alex Cross" mysteries by James Patterson (the latest is "Cat and Mouse") published by Warner, or "The Last Family" by John Ramsey Miller, by Bantam.

For a humorous book, I recommend "Letters from a Nut," by Ted L. Nancy, with a forward by Jerry Seinfeld and published by Avon Books. It's a compilation of hilarious letters — filled with absurd comments and questions — that Nancy sent as a consumer to various corporations. The responses he got back are so polite and serious that they're funny. I roared.

Mall walkers register for supportive clubs



It's time to walk off all those holiday cookies as mall walking clubs hold registrations for programs offering incentives and perks to shoppers who want to keep fit.

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO
Editor

Walking programs at the area's larger shopping centers allow you a free fitness workout in a climate-controlled environment and the chance to earn prizes for your efforts.

And since the neighborhood medical center usually co-sponsors the walking club, you get free monthly health tests and information seminars as an added bonus.

At Twelve Oaks in Novi, the mall even arranges for low-impact aerobic classes for its walkers each Monday and Wednesday from 9 to 10 a.m. in the Lord & Taylor court. The class is instructed by staff from the University of Michigan's Health Education Department and is well-attended by regulars who have incorporated the morning program into their weekly routine.

As walkers keep track of their "miles," many malls reward them for milestones reached with fanny packs, T-shirts and water bottles.

The malls with organized walking clubs urge interested shoppers to register for membership now, through the management office or Information Desk. An identification badge is usually issued to members along with a newsletter and outline of the program. You may be requested to sign a waiver.

Fairlane: Southfield Fwy/Michigan Ave. Dearborn. Doors open to walkers at 8 a.m., near movies entrance. Walkers club co-sponsored by Oakwood Hospital. (313) 593-3646.

Lakeside: M-59 & Schoenherr, Sterling Heights. Four main entrances open to walkers at 8 a.m. Sundays 10 a.m. The Inside Track walking club is co-sponsored by St. Joseph's Healthier Image. Sign up at the agency's "store," lower level Sears Court. (810) 247-4131.

Laurel Park Place: Six Mile/Newburgh, Livonia. Doors open to walkers at 8 a.m. Max & Ernie Entrance off Six Mile. The Walking Club includes blood pressure screenings by Botsford Hospital staff, 4th Monday of each month near Jacobson's. (313) 462-1100.

Livonia Mall: Seven Mile/Middlebelt. Doors open to walkers at 7:30 a.m. through Entrance G. Walkers Club is co-sponsored by Botsford General

Hospital. Blood pressure screenings 8-10 a.m. the third Wednesday of each month. (248) 476-1160.

Meadowbrook Village Mall: Walton/Adams, Rochester Hills. Main entrance opens to walkers at 7 a.m. No formal walking club. (248) 376-9461.

Oakland Mall: 14 Mile/John R. Troy. Doors open to walkers at 8:30 a.m. through glass canopy off 14 Mile or entrance near movies. Sign up for Club Tread at the lower level Information Booth. (248) 685-6000.

Northland Center: Eight Mile/Crestfield, Southfield. Doors open to walkers at 8:30 a.m. through Entrance C near T.J. Maxx. Pacers is the well-attended formal walking club. (248) 557-0460.

Somerset Collection: Big Beaver/Coolidge, Troy. Blue Cross co-sponsors Walkabout Club, 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. daily with incentives and techniques for members. Through main mall entrances. (248) 643-6360.

Summit Place: Elizabeth Lake/Telegraph, Waterford. Doors open to walkers at 7 a.m. near Picnic food court. All other doors open at 8 a.m. No formal walking club. (248) 682-0123.

Tel-Twelve Mall: Telegraph/12 Mile, Southfield. Opens for walkers at 8 a.m. through entrance nearest Kmart. No formal walking program. (248) 353-4111.

Twelve Oaks: 12 Mile/Novi Roads. Novi. Opens to walkers at 8 a.m. Fitness Over 50, a low-impact aerobics program, Mondays and Wednesdays from 9-10 a.m. in Lord & Taylor Court area. (248) 348-9438.

Westland Center: Wayne/Warren Roads. Doors open to walkers at 7 a.m. Use Olm's Entrance. Westland Walkers program meets second Wednesday of each month with health programs. (313) 425-5001.

Wonderland Mall: Plymouth/Middlebelt in Livonia. All doors open to walkers at 7:30 a.m. Sunday 10 a.m. Wonder Walkers Club offers free blood pressure screenings by St. Mary's staff 8-10 a.m. near Information Desk, second Monday of each month. (313) 522-4100.

Promoting AirTouch



Scoring a goal: Christine Buckley, 14, of Birmingham, is elated to get a autograph from Detroit Red Wings center Kris Draper, while right wing Darren McCarthy takes a phone break at Air Touch Cellular's Easy Store, 128 South Old Woodward in Birmingham, recently. About 150 hockey fans lined up to get the players' signatures on everything from pucks to hats, to the shirts off their backs.

TIPS BEFORE YOU START A WALKING PROGRAM

- Consult your physician before starting any walking program.
- Choose the proper walking attire. Shoes should have thick, flexible soles that cushion and absorb shock.
- Choose a partner to walk with to make walking more enjoyable and help you stick with your program.

— Courtesy of Laurel Park Place, Livonia and Botsford General Hospital

HOW TO FIND YOUR TARGET HEART RATE ZONE

- To condition your heart and lungs, you must bring your heart rate to a certain point called the Target Heart Rate. This is measured by taking your pulse.
- To calculate your target heart rate zone, subtract your age from 220. This is your maximum heart rate. (Example 220-50=170)
- Now multiply your maximum heart rate by 60% to 75% to find your target heart rate zone. (Example 170 x .60=102 & 170 x .75=127.50) The target heart rate zone in this example is from 102 to 127.5.
- To measure your pulse, place the tips of two fingers on your neck (carotid arteries) located to the left and right of your Adams Apple. Count your pulse for 10 seconds and multiply by six. (Example 18 beats x 6=180).
- Measure your pulse five minutes into your walk and again just before you finish.
- While walking, stay within your Target Heart Rate Zone.

Downtowns enjoy strong year-end sales

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO
Editor

The Main Street shopping districts urged area residents to "Come Home for the Holidays," and year-end sales figures show — they did! Most downtown retailers saw gains up to 20-percent over last year.

On New Year's Eve, gift shop owner Larry Bird looked over the empty shelves at Gabriela's in downtown Plymouth and enjoyed a deep sigh of satisfaction.

"Wow," said the proprietor of his 15-year-old business. "My inventory is at an all-time low. Sales were up 18-percent over 1996 this November-December. My candle sales alone were up 80 percent. Point-of-sale tracking showed about one-third of our customers came from Plymouth. I guess when you take care of your customers, they take care of you."

Down the street at card and gift shop sideways,

manager Sharon Feu said holiday sales "were very solid and up from last year."

"Anything to do with snowmen flew off the shelves," she said. "And the more elaborate gold and silver decor items, plus products from our gourmet shop, fared very well."

On the other side of town, Richard Astrein of Astrein Jewelers in downtown Birmingham, also let out a sigh of relief when he reviewed holiday sales figures.

"Last year we took a hit from Somerset North opening, but this year we got it all back," he said. "Our sales were up 20-percent. The big sellers were diamond pendants and diamond earrings at price points that were healthy — in the \$500 to \$2,500 range."

Down the street, Elizabeth Harp of Harp's Linenry, was also toasting a 20-percent sales increase. "What a wonderful holiday shopping season this year," she exclaimed. "We sold our share of bras, body slimmers and peignoir sets. Business was very good."

In downtown Rochester, Sherrie Tattler of Bellissima, a unique home decor store, said holiday sales were excellent. "We have very little merchandise left," especially candles, candle holders and picture frames.

"I can't say sales were up over last year," she said. "They were about the same, but shoppers seemed to be in a very 'up' mood, enjoying the experience of shopping in our store, appreciating our impressive packaging, and all the personal service. I think that's why they come downtown instead of the mall."

Randy Norman of Eli's Menswear in Troy said he was disappointed in this year's holiday sales, "which were down from last year, but still good."

"We sold a lot of casual clothing like sweaters, shirts and slacks, but suits were dead. I guess guys are just not dressing up like before."



Perfect fit: Carrie Lipsitz of West Bloomfield gets help picking out shoes from store owner Jayme Leib at Imelda's Closet in downtown Birmingham during the city's Mid-Night Madness sale in mid-December.

Photo by Tom Hornum