

Birth trauma examined at future event

When Ruth Anya McGinnis first heard about reliving the birthing process to untangle emotional problems, she thought it was far-out mumbo jumbo. Then, while treating a male patient in her Southfield psychotherapy practice, McGinnis said, she watched him re-enact his birth.

"For a moment in the therapy session, he was reliving it and was able to remember," McGinnis said. "Before that I thought this was all California craziness. But that convinced me. My journey began in my efforts to try to help him as his memory was beginning to emerge."

This was the first step, she said, in reliving her own birth and to begin dealing with emotional and physical problems. "The thinking behind this is very different from the basic logic that babies don't remember what we do in the very beginning, especially pre-natally," said McGinnis, a Southfield resident, who has since retired from her practice.

In fact, McGinnis said, reliving her birth has helped her overcome dyslexia and paved the way to understanding and coming to terms with her mother. McGinnis refers to herself as a "colleague and in training" with William R. Emerson, a teacher, writer, lecturer and leader in the field of birth psychology.

"Birth trauma may be caused by a baby's own character and personality in response to birth complications," Emerson wrote in "Indepth News," a newsletter for Indepth, the Northwest Institute for Bonding and Perinatal Psychology.

Parents with children who are unexplainably tense, as well as professionals who work with children, are invited to a lecture and workshop conducted by Emerson next month. A lecture, demonstration and open discussion will be held from 7-10 p.m., Thursday, June 4, at the Birmingham Unitarian Church in Bloomfield Hills. The event will introduce participants to "the widespread problem of birth trauma as a major cause of stress, behavioral problems and learning problems during childhood," according to a brochure.

Local workshop

Emerson will conduct a workshop Friday-Sunday, June 5-7, in St. John Center in Plymouth Township. The focus is the "prevalence and negative effects of birth trauma, and ways that birth trauma can be evaluated and treated."

"The only determinant of the degree of traumatization is their own character and personality and how they respond to the birth complications," Emerson wrote. In the "Indepth News" article, Emerson described "participation trauma," using a baby who clenched her fists and had a cry that was distinctly angry. The parents told him that her birth was pleasant and uneventful, except that during the delivery the baby's mother became angry at the doctor, because he arrived late and gave her a drug she didn't want.

"As the mother discussed these issues with me, her jaw and fists became clenched and she cried in rage," Emerson said. "Her newborn daughter was sleeping next to her and as the mother released her feelings, the jaw and fists of the sleeping baby also relaxed, and she slept longer than she had ever slept."

Emerson has treated thousands of parents and professionals using what he refers to as "fail-safe techniques." The local workshop will also include treatment demonstrations. The results of reliving your birth are amazing, said McGinnis, adding that it has helped reverse her dyslexia.

"There have been many things that have been helpful," she said. "But this has been essential. I got my Ph.D., but it almost destroyed me physically, the stress of doing that. Now, I'm reading and writing with near normalcy. The work (Emerson's) has been a modern-day miracle for me."

McGinnis said when she began experiencing memories of being inside her mother's womb in 1943, her recollection was from a baby's perspective. This experience, she said, also made her feel a closeness with her mother, now deceased, that hadn't been possible before.

Felt estranged

"Earlier experiences left me feeling estranged from her and I don't feel that anymore," McGinnis added. Although her mother always told her her birth was normal, McGinnis later learned it was much more traumatic and was nearly fatal for both.

Since her own revelations, McGinnis has become a disciple, disseminating information about birth trauma and how it affects behavior in children and in the emotions of adults. Signs of birth trauma are crying for otherwise unexplained reasons; an unusually inflexible child; sleep disturbances; eating problems and the baby going through intense periods of upset at particular times of the day.

"This is an indication that something is crying in an attempt to communicate," McGinnis said. "They're crying to let the adults know there is something the matter. If a baby cries for a supposed unknown reason, we need to look at what they are trying to communicate."

"Maybe they're trying to communicate something about something they are remembering at birth or an earlier experience."

For the most part, a natural birth results in much less trauma to the infant, she said, because there is less intervention with anesthesia, forceps and monitoring. "Of course, there are many times that they are essential for the safety of the mother and baby," McGinnis added. "But there are also many times these are used more out of habit, or out of an attempt to control legal risks."

Emerson works on transforming that "trauma."

For example, one of the ways infants are traumatized is that they experience the birth alone and they don't have the sense of being in a fully empathic environment.

When revisiting the birth, the child and adult can receive messages that they aren't alone and that people do care about what they're experiencing.

The local lecture, demonstration and discussion on June 4 costs \$15 at the door or \$10 for people who send a check to McGinnis at 28110 Inkster Road, Southfield, Mich. 48034-5632 before the event. The cost of the three-day workshop is \$350 and includes two lunches and two handouts. There are discounts for couples and full-time students. A deposit of \$150 is required to register. For more information, call McGinnis at (248) 356-1219.

How to avoid food contamination

Now that warm weather has arrived, we see a lot of people barbecuing and having picnics. It's wonderful to be able to get outdoors and enjoy a meal, but it's important to be careful with food preparation and handling at this time of year.

Bacteria breeds in warm temperatures which is why we must be diligent about foods that can contaminate our kitchens and other foods. Some high-protein foods like meat, eggs, cheese and dressings are highly susceptible to housing a variety of bacteria. If they are not stored frozen or refrigerated between 34 and 40 degrees, just one bacterium can multiply to one trillion bacteria in just 24 hours.

The speed at which bacteria multiply is a particular problem for picnickers that may have chicken salad sandwiches or salads in their

baskets. A better choice might be to bring a fruit salad and breadsticks or a bagel for your picnic lunch. Plus it's lower in fat if you still opt for the chicken salad be sure to wrap it well and store it in a cooler with plenty of ice.

The preparation and tools used for barbecuing make it another viable breeding ground for bacteria. Many people spear raw meat with a fork to put it on the grill, and then once it's cooked use that same fork to remove the meat. That can be a dangerous practice because the raw juices are still on the fork and could contaminate the cooked meat.

Another danger zone is how you serve meat off the grill. Never serve cooked meat on the same plate used to carry the raw meat to the barbecue. In order to kill the bacteria, you must cook ground meat and poultry until they're no longer pink and the juices run clear.

Proper food handling and storage could save you from getting food poisoning. Millions of food poisoning cases could be avoided each year if people were more careful about keeping hands and cooking

surfaces clean.

Unsuspecting diners may enjoy a delicious meal that tastes, smells and looks the same, but the contaminated food can cause chills, fatigue, achy muscles or indigestion.

These simple tips can help keep your kitchen and food from becoming contaminated with common bacteria like salmonella, E.coli and staphylococcus.

■ Wash hands before, after and during food preparation with antibacterial soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds.

■ Wash hands after using the bathroom, diapering a baby, blowing your nose or touching a pet.

■ Sterilize cutting boards or other surfaces that have had contact with raw meat or poultry with two teaspoons of chlorine bleach in a quart of water.

■ Cook meat - especially ground meat - and poultry thoroughly.

■ Discard any leftover marinades after using, rather than reheating as a sauce.

■ Don't let cooked foods sit at room temperature for more than two hours. Store leftovers in the refrigerator immediately.

■ Thaw frozen meat in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If you are strapped for time, defrost the meat in the microwave and cook at once.

■ Raw meat, fish and poultry, should be stored toward the back of the refrigerator shelf. This is the coldest area.

You can enjoy a relaxing picnic or an evening barbecue safely by following these guidelines. It's actually quite easy to store and prepare foods to avoid contamination; it's just a matter of being aware of how to do it. So fire up the grill and have a fabulous meal!

I read every one of your letters and I love your comments! Please keep writing me with any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles for "Talk to the Mirror." Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2974. For more information on Weight Watchers, call 1-888-3FLORINE.

(Florine Mark is an appointee to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and the Michigan Fitness Foundation.)

TALK TO THE MIRROR



FLORINE MARK

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Helping hand: Dr. Anthony Sensoli performs LASIK laser surgery on Ron Wissner on Thursday. LASIK is a process where a small flap is cut in the cornea and folded back to allow the doctor to perform modifications to the inner cornea. Sensoli is the Medical Director at The Laser Center in Farmington Hills.

TLC strives to enhance sight through lasers

BY BARD PERT TEMPLTON
SPECIAL WRITER

A chance to view the world without glasses or contact lenses.

That's what physicians at The Laser Center, Inc. hope to bring to patients who have undergone high tech laser procedures at their outpatient clinics.

Since 1987, TLC facilities around the nation have performed over one million such procedures in a unique partnership between optometrists and ophthalmologists. TLC opened its first Michigan location in Farmington Hills last November.

Today there are 43 centers across North America. Several weeks ago TLC announced that their facilities would offer a first-of-its-kind-in-the industry Lifetime Commitment policy. The plan pledges free enhancement procedures to ensure the best possible visual stability for qualifying patients who undergo procedures with TLC doctors and return to their own eye doctors for annual exams.

"The Lifetime Commitment demonstrates TLC's confidence in the long term visual stability of laser vision correction and reinforces its unwavering commitment to our patients," stated Dr. Michael Wallace, Executive Director of the new Farmington Hills office.

The local TLC has two surgeons

on staff who share the work load, each spending one day a week at the center.

"We don't do any routine primary care here," Wallace said. "Patients see their own eye doctors, some who are affiliated with us, and then they are recommended to the center."

TLC has about 300 doctors across Michigan who work with them and regularly refer patients to their facility.

Patients scheduled for surgery usually spend a couple hours in the center that day. Procedures are done on an outpatient basis without general anesthesia and progress of the eye is monitored in a series of follow-up visits.

Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK) and Laser In-Situ Keratomileusis (LASIK) are the two latest surgical procedures being performed at TLC for correction of myopia (nearsightedness).

During the PRK procedure, the protective upper layer of the cornea is removed before computer-controlled laser pulses are applied to the surface of the cornea to change its shape. The process generally takes less than five minutes and is normally painless.

In the LASIK procedure, utilized for patients with higher prescriptions, doctors use the excimer laser to remove tissue instead of

Please see LASER, D6

Bruxism can be a grind on your teeth

ASK THE DENTIST



DR. DAVID BANDA

Bruxism, or clenching and grinding teeth, is a common condition affecting many people. It is often the cause of many other oral-facial ailments such as toothaches, broken teeth, worn teeth, muscle aches or jaw-joint pain.

It's interesting to note that many people who have severe grinding habits are often unaware that they do this because they exhibit this behavior only while asleep. It's frequently a spouse, family member, or someone else close to you who alerts a "bruxer" that the condition exists in the first place.

What to look for
Several key symptoms will often

indicate that tooth grinding may be causing some physical damage. Ask yourself these questions:

■ Do I wake up with sore jaw muscles?
■ Do my teeth appear worn down?

■ Do my teeth hurt all over, especially when I wake up?
■ Do I have noise or pain with the jaw joints?

The jaw-joint noise and/or pain is often the most severe result of a long-term grinding habit. The jaw joints, or more technically the temporomandibular (TMJs), are located directly in front of the ear openings and are the connection of your lower jaw (mandible) to your skull.

The causes of bruxism
Science has not definitively answered all of the mysteries of why people grind their teeth, but we have learned a great deal about it. Many factors contribute to tooth grinding: behavior, stress, personality types, sleep disorders, and misaligned teeth.

Grinding can be the body's way of relieving stress while we sleep. There are several dental conditions that can contribute to grind-

ing habits. Misaligned teeth or bad bite relationships, including "interferences" (or high spots), can often be perceived by the body as imbalances that need adjusting. And nature's way of adjusting these areas is by grinding them away.

In its mildest form, grinding can cause muscle soreness and mild, generalized toothaches. In its more severe form, grinding can cause chipped, cracked or worn teeth and even noise and pain in the jaw joints. This can lead to a debilitating loss of function of the mouth, reduced opening of the mouth, inability to chew certain foods and severe, chronic pain.

There are a number of therapies that can prevent damage to the teeth, muscles and jaw joints by minimizing jaw-grinding effects to these areas. However, no predictable treatment exists to completely stop someone from grinding. Stress reduction, mouth guard appliances specifically designed to decrease grinding damage, and even bite adjustments by your dentist can make grinding less bothersome.

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Please see BANDA, D6