The Observer

Health & Fitness

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MEDICAL BRIEFS

Top honor

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital has been selected for a second time as one of the top-performing hospitals in the United States in the seventh annual study conducted by HCIA and the Health Network. The Top 100 Hospitals - Benchmarks for Success - 1999 is based on a model used to measure performance among general care and teaching hospitals. St. Joe's was selected for this honor from approximately 3,000 hospitals in the United States.

Inaugural meeting

The National Federation for the Blind of Michigan, Western Wayne County Chapter will be holding their inaugural meeting at 1 p.m. Feb. 12. The meeting will be held at Leon's Restaurant near the northeast corner of Michigan and Telegraph roads. Food can be purchased off the menu at 12:30 p.m. Call Fred Oliver (734) 421-7273 for information.

Prostate screen

St. Mary Hospital in Livonia will offer a Prostate Cancer Screening Day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 5 in the St. Mary Hospital Pavilion (14555 Levan Road). The prostate screening is free and provides a prostate exam by a physician, blood test to measure the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) level and educational material. Preregistration is requested by calling (734) 655-8940 or (800) 494-1650.

Breastfeeding help

La Leche League of Livonia meets monthly for breastfeeding support and information. Babies and children are always welcome. Next meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, February 10th. Please call for location and or additional information. Theresa (734) 261-6814, Vicki (313) 937-3011, or Michele (734) 591-7071.

Dedication

The newly named dining room at Heartland Health Care - University will be dedicated at a ribbon cutting ceremony. In attendance will be Livonia Mayor Jack Kirksey and Heartland Administrator Roslind Ferrone. The event will begin at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10. The A-wing dining room is located at Heartland Health Care - University, 28550 Five Mile Road, Livonia.

Chronic conditions

Sign up for a six-week program that puts you back in control of your chronic condition and in improving your healthy outlook on life. The next session of Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions begins at 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11 at Henry Ford Medical Center - Fairlane in conference room 4. Subsequent dates are Feb. 18 and 25; March 3, 10 and 17. The center is located at 19401 Hubbard Drive at Evergreen in Dearborn. The series is free. Call (313) 664-8473.

Making connections

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous venues for you to offer newsworthy information including Medical Datebook (upcoming calendar events); Medical Newsmakers (appointments/new hires in the medical field); and Medical Briefs (medical advisories, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies).

We also welcome newsworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories.

To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

CALL:
(734) 953-2151

WRITE:
Observer & Eccentric Newspapers
Sports Desk/Med. Newsmakers or Briefs
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STORY BY RENEE SKOGLUND

Sugar high

TAMMIE GRAVENSTAFF ARTIST

Sugar bowls are filled to the brim

"Sugar in the morning, sugar in the evening, sugar at suppertime. Be my little sugar and love me all the time."

Today, that popular McGuire Sisters song from the 1950s could serve as a national anthem for sugar-happy Americans. "We simply consume too much sugar – about 20 teaspoons a day or enough to bake about 100 banana cream pies a year," says Kathy Goldberg, a registered dietitian with the University of Michigan Health System.

The USDA recommends limiting your added sugars – from packaged foods and the sugar bowl – to 10 percent of your daily calories. That's 10 teaspoons for a 2,000-calorie diet. Don't worry about the *natural* sugars from fruit and milk.

Excess sugar can lead to problems more serious than tooth decay, such as obesity, diabetes, hyperlipidemia (blood fat), malnutrition and arthritis (obesity is hard on the joints). Sugar is addicting because it [illegible]

The body will process it up and store it in a quick amount of time. You'll have lots of energy, then no energy," says Gail Cox, a registered dietitian with Heartland Health Development Network.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest, a non-profit educational and advocacy group in Washington, D.C., petitioned the Food and Drug Administration last August to require that food labels declare how much sugar is added to soft drinks, ice cream and other foods. CSPI is asking the FDA to limit the daily value for added sugars to 10 teaspoons (40 grams).

"Sugar consumption has been going through the roof. It has increased by 28 percent since 1983, fueling soaring obesity rates and other health problems. It's vital that the FDA require labels that would enable consumers to monitor, and reduce, their sugar intake," said Michael Jacobson, executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

If your sugar bowl hasn't been shaken up yet, consider these facts:

- The average American consumes at least 64 pounds of sugar per year, and the average teenage boy at least 109 pounds.
- The typical American gets 16 percent of his or her calories from added sugars; children 6-11 get 18 percent, and teenagers 12-19 20 percent.
- Calorie-dense foods, which are typically high in sugar and/or fat, contribute to obesity. Between 1976-80 and 1988-94, overweight rates in teenage boys rose from 5 to 12 percent; in teenage girls, the rate rose from 7 to 11 percent, and in adults, it rose from 25 to 35 percent.
- The USDA projects that if consumption trends continue, added-sugar intake will increase almost 20 percent between 1996 and 2005.
- In 1996, 33 percent of Michigan's adults were obese, compared to 29.8 percent of American adults.

"Too much sugar tends to crowd out other nutritious food from our diet, such as whole grains and vegetables and low-fat dairy foods," says Goldberg. "A particular concern is that children have small stomachs. Having too many of their calories from sugar crowds out other nutritious foods from their diet. When they're filling up on sugar, that's excess calories that can lead to obesity."

Stop the pop

The worst offender is soda pop, says Cox. "It's liquid sugar. The saddest thing is it's so pervasive in the schools. And no one even says anything about it. What will this do to their bones?"

CSPI research shows Americans drink twice as much soda pop as milk. People who drink soft drinks instead of milk or other dairy products likely will have lower calcium intakes, which can lead to fragile bones and osteoporosis. Girls build 92 percent of their bone mass by age 18, and playing calcium "catch up" later on is impossible.

Drinking soda pop often starts soon after infancy. According to 1994-96 research data from the CSPI, one-fifth of toddlers – children 1 or 2 years of age – consume an average of seven ounces, almost one cup, of soda pop a day. Boys between the ages of 12 and 19 consume at least two 12-ounce sodas, or 9 percent of their caloric intake. Girls consume slightly less, or 8 percent of their caloric intake.

Although tooth decay rates have declined in recent decades, refined sugar is still a threat to tooth enamel. Soft drinks promote decay because they bathe the teeth of regular consumers for long periods of time during the day.

Juices are fine, but keep in mind that fruit "drinks," "beverages," "ades," and "cocktails" are essentially non-carbonated soda pop. Sunny Delight, Fruitopia, and other brands contain only 5-10 percent juice.

Good sugar

All sugars are not bad. Dairy foods are very high in sugar called lactose, and fruits are very high in a sugar called fructose. Those sugars occur naturally along with the fiber, vitamins and minerals our bodies need. These nutrients fortify our bodies against heart disease, osteoporosis, stroke and some cancers.

"I don't think it's really about stopping eating chocolate," says Cox about controlling sugar intake. "It's balancing, putting it in perspective and looking at the diet as a whole." In making a choice between an apple or a piece of chocolate, the question becomes, "how are you guiding yourself nutritionally?"

If Cox had to indict one type of sugar, it would be refined sugar since it contains no nutrients. At least honey has some trace levels of nutrients. And honey-eaters most likely are more conscientious about their lifestyles, she says.

"If someone cares enough about their weight to eat honey, they probably eat their vegetables and exercise."

Limit your sugar intake by avoiding sticky, sweet foods, limiting soft drinks, reading labels and using more spices – cinnamon, vanilla, spearmint and anise – that provide a sweet taste without the sugar. Also, look for breakfast cereals that have no more than 8 grams of sugar per serving.

However, don't give up that occasional piece of chocolate. "Life without sugar would be horrible," says Cox.

Sugar shock!

Consider the sugar content of the following popular foods:

Snickers, bar (2.1 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 58%

TastyKake Honey Bun (3 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 60%

Lowfat fruit-flavored yogurt (8 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 70%

Entenmann's Chocolate Fudge Cake (3 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 85%

Burger King Cinnamin w/Icing (4.7 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 95%

Pepsi (12 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 103%

Hostess Lemon Fruit Pie (4 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 115%

McDonald's Vanilla Shake (20 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 120%

Cinnabon (7 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 123%

Sunkist Orange Soda (12 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 130%

McDonald's McFlurry w/Butterfingers (10 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 138%

Strawberry Passion Awareness Fruitopia (20 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 178%

Dairy Queen Mr. Misty Slush (32 oz.)
USDA daily value percent: 280%

REDUCE INJURY THIS WINTER SEASON

When snow, ice and frigid weather blast into town, watch out, says the American Chiropractic Association (ACA). Winter recreational activities and chores can pose problems for the outdoor enthusiast whose body is not in condition.

Winter sports like skating, skiing, and sledding can cause painful muscle strains or tears if you're not in shape. Even shoveling snow the wrong way, clambering awkwardly over snow banks, slipping on sidewalks and wearing the wrong kinds of clothing can all pose the potential for strains and sprains.

Simply walking outside in the freezing weather without layers of warm clothing can intensify older joint problems and cause a great deal of pain. As muscles and blood vessels contract to conserve the body's heat, the blood supply to extremities is reduced. This lowers the functional capacity of many muscles, particularly among the physically unfit. If we know what areas of our bodies are most vulnerable, we can condition ourselves in the off-season to avoid injury and costly health care bills.

"First, make sure to get plenty of rest and eat a healthy breakfast. Then, to help condition your body, do some at-home stretching exercises. Focus on lower back muscles, hamstrings and calf muscles," says Dr. Carl Heigl, president of ACA's Council on Sports Injuries and Physical Fitness. "To reduce injury, run down a mental check list to assess your mental awareness, equipment condition and your physical fitness level. Next, take off the chill that settles in on the way to your rink, pond or hilltop, and warm up just before you start a sport to get the blood flowing and to increase your heart rate."

The ACA and its Council on Sports Injuries and Physical Fitness suggest the following tips to help you fight back the winter weather:

Skiing — do 10 to 15 squats. Stand with your legs a shoulders' width apart, knees aligned over your feet. Slowly lower your buttocks as you bend your knees over your feet. Stand up straight again.

Skating — do several lunges. Take a moderately advanced step with one foot. Let your back knee come down to the floor while keeping your shoulders in position over your hips. Repeat the process with your other foot.

Sledding/tobogganing — do knee-to-chest stretches to fight compression injuries caused by repetitive bouncing over the snow. Either sitting or lying on your back, pull your knees to your chest and hold for up to 30 seconds.

Don't forget cool-down stretching for all of these sports.

Shoveling snow can also wreak havoc on the musculoskeletal system. The ACA suggests the following tips for exercise of the snow shoveling variety.

- If you must shovel snow, be careful. Listen to weather forecasts so you can rise early and have time to shovel before work and layer clothing to keep your muscles warm and flexible.
- Shoveling can strain "de-conditioned" muscles between your shoulders, in your upper back, lower back, buttocks and legs. So, do some warm-up stretching before you grab that shovel.
- When you do shovel, push the snow straight ahead. Don't try to throw it. Walk it to the snow bank. Avoid sudden twisting and turning motions.
- Bend your knees to lift when shoveling. Let the muscles of your legs and arms do the work, not your back.
- Take frequent rest breaks to take the strain off your muscles. A fatigued body asks for injury. Stop if you feel chest pain, or get really tired or have shortness of breath. You may need immediate professional help.

If you do not know a doctor of chiropractic in your area, call the ACA at 800-986-4636, or check out the ACA's web site at www.amerchiro.org