

Constipation

from page C7

Call the doctor

Although constipation can be bothersome, it's usually not serious. However, it could be the only noticeable symptom of a serious underlying disorder, such as cancer, says the AGA. It can also lead to complications, such as hemorrhoids caused by extreme straining or fissures caused by the hard stool stretching the sphincters. Bleeding can occur and appear as bright red streaks on the surface of the stool.

Extreme constipation can lead to fecal impactions, which usually occur in very young children or older adults.

Notify the doctor when symptoms are severe, last longer than three weeks, or when any of the

above complications occur. A doctor can detect problems in the rectum and lower colon by doing a sigmoidoscopy, which is accomplished by inserting a flexible, lighted instrument through the anus. Or a doctor can perform a colonoscopy to inspect the entire colon.

Another diagnostic tool is the colon transit study, which involves the patient swallowing two pills each containing 12 small, metal rings. The rings are tracked by x-ray over a period of one week to detect movement. If necessary, a doctor can perform additional tests.

Don't wait too long before seeing a doctor, said Margolin. "We can help. You don't have to be miserable."

Touch

from page C7

have art classes. Why don't you teach one?"

Gorman moves around the table smiling, offering suggestions and encouragement.

"It's been absolutely delightful," she says. "I have met so many people who give me energy. It's a group of very inspirational people. Everything is always good at Gilda's Club, even when people have problems, because someone is holding them up. We take them a step at a time and give them a cup of coffee and hug when they go home."

Susan Johnson of Rochester Hills is working on a picture of a koala bear. She enjoys creating art, but also visiting with the other women. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in May.

"My picture is right there," she says, pointing to a colorful leaf on the wall. "I like working with the colors. It's relaxing. You need something to do that takes your mind away from everything. You don't need a lot of stuff when you're working with colored pencils, but the main thing is the people. They're so nice and encouraging. I like getting feedback and hearing about their illness."

Cancer is draining. In many cases, the cure can be as bad as the disease. Chemotherapy has all kinds of side effects, many of them unpleasant. Some people develop mouth sores, lose their hair — and the will to keep fighting.

"I try real hard to be positive about cancer," said Ruth Wood of Madison Heights, who has liver and lung cancer. "When I'm here doing artwork I forget about cancer and have fun. There are a lot of survivors, and it gives me a positive outlook. Like at night when I can't sleep, instead of lying there thinking about myself I'll do some artwork. I really look forward to coming

here. If I feel down it gasces me up for quite awhile. I have more good days than bad days. They're all family here. Everyone's understanding."

An hour flies by. I find myself wishing I had more time to stay and color and talk with these brave, creative women. I share my story with them and start to cry. It still hurts. Phyllis gives me a hug, and tells me about Gilda's Alumni Club, a grief support group that meets twice a month. Rita invites me to join Gilda's Singers 7-8 p.m. Tuesday. She jokes that she could plan my whole week.

I surprise them and show up to sing on Tuesday. Rita is not there, but Phyllis and Ruth are. They're glad to see me, and I'm glad to see them. These women understand cancer is about loss, and hope. It's a thief that can take away the people you love and your sense of well-being. But cancer also teaches you to cherish life as you never have before.

Life isn't easy. One used to say, "It's always something," and she's right. But at Gilda's Club you learn to grin and bear it.

Gilda's Club is at 3517 Rochester Road in Royal Oak (look for the white picket fence). For more information, call (248) 577-0800 or visit www.gildasclubdetroit.org

This is the first story for "Healing Touch," a new feature to our Health & Fitness page that illuminates the efforts of people dedicated to helping others get well. Send suggestions for programs or people to feature in *Healing Touch* to Renee Skoglund, Health Reporter, Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft College, Livonia, MI 48150, or e-mail rskoglund@home.com. Keely Kaleski Wygonik is assistant managing editor of features for the Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers.

Join the 2002 Komen Detroit Race for the Cure

Lace up those athletic shoes and join the fight against breast cancer!

It's time for the 11th Annual Komen Detroit Race for the Cure, presented locally by the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute. The event will be held Saturday, April 20 at Comerica Park in Detroit. Over 1,500 breast cancer survivors will attend the event, a testimonial to the benefits of early detection and treatment of the disease. The event also honors lost loved ones.

Michigan's largest race, the Komen Detroit Race for Cure funds local breast cancer screening, education and treatment programs, as well as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Research Program. Michigan's First Lady Michelle Engler will act as this year's honorary

race chairwoman. Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick and his wife, Carlita, will serve as co-chairmen.

The event schedule is as follows:

■ 6:30 a.m. — Information and packet pick-up at Comerica Park.

■ 8 a.m. — Opening ceremonies honoring breast cancer survivors and memorial to lost loved ones.

■ 8:30 a.m. — Warm-up

■ 9 a.m. — 5K men's competitive run; fun walk (non-competitive); 5K walk/run for women

men, family and friends.

Entry fees for adults 18-64 are

\$20 by March 29, \$25 by April 12, and \$30 thereafter. Fees for

youths 6-17 and seniors 65 and

older are \$10 by March 29 and

\$15 thereafter. Children age 5

and under are free. Participants may register online at www.karmanos.org/racefortheuredetroit/ or order entry forms by calling 1-800-KARMONOS at 1-800-527-6266 weekdays between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Registration forms also are available at New Balance Troy and Farmington stores.

The Race Expo will be held 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, April 19 at the Southfield Centre for the Arts, 24350 Southfield Road (between Nine and Ten Mile), Southfield. The Expo is the last chance to register for the race.

Why join the race?

It is estimated that 7,300 women in Michigan will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2002. An estimated 1,400 mothers, sisters, wives and friends will die of the disease. The 2001

Komen Detroit Race for the Cure drew 29,000 participants and raised \$1 million for breast cancer education, treatment and research.

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation was established in 1982 by Nancy Brinker to honor the memory of her sister, Susan G. Komen, who died of breast cancer at the age of 35. Today, the foundation has more than 75,000 volunteers working through a network of U.S. and International affiliates and Komen Race for the Cure events. Since its inception, the Komen Foundation and its affiliates have invested more than \$350 million in the fight against breast cancer.

You can make a difference. Lace up those athletic shoes and sign up for the 2002 Komen Detroit Race for the Cure.

ONGOING SUPPORT GROUPS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

The Multiple Sclerosis Support Group meets 6 p.m. Fridays at the Livonia Family YMCA, 14255 Strick, Livonia. Call (734) 261-2161.

OVEREATING

Overeaters Anonymous, a support group for compulsive eaters, meets 7-8:30 p.m. Sundays at St. Mary Hospital in Livonia, Pavilion A. Call (734) 655-8940 or (800) 494-1650.

TOPS

Join a Take Off Pounds Sensibly support group. TOPS #29 meets 6 p.m. every Tuesday at Newburg United Methodist Church, 35500 Ann Arbor Trail, Livonia. Call Marie at (734) 762-0386.

WEIGHT CONTROL

Beaumont Hospital's Weight Control Center will offer a new 16-session information and motivation session on weight control 6:30-8:15 p.m. Wednesdays or 10-10:45 a.m. Thursdays. Each session costs \$15. The center is located at 390 Park, Suite 300, north of Maple west of Woodward, Birmingham. Call (248) 723-6300.

GRIEF SUPPORT

Angela Hospice in Livonia offers ongoing grief support groups every second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Groups are free-of-charge and open to the public. Call Bereavement Coordinator Ruth Favor at (734) 464-7810.

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800-579-SELL today!

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Orthodontics

by Josephine Finazzo, D.M.D.

BRACES AS FASHION STATEMENT

Unlike their parents, who might have been self-conscious about their "tin grins," today's young orthodontic patients seize the opportunity of all about making their patients feel comfortable wearing braces to make fashion statements. From about their orthodontic treatment. By focusing on soft pasties that coordinate with a wardrobe to the positive during treatment, the patient can have bright smiles for celebrating holidays or expressing a little fun during it, and look forward to having a school spirit, young patients use the colors of their lifetime of beautiful teeth afterwards. We even elastic ties to make personal statements. These have a computer imaging system that helps us, which connect the arch wire to the brackets patients visualize what the end result of on each tooth, can be changed when the wires are orthodontic treatment may look like. For more changed. Even the replaceable rubber bands that information about orthodontics, contact us for as many patients use daily come in a rainbow of appointments at 442-8885. We are located at colors. As a result, young patients come to view 19550 Middlebelt. Look for our next article in their braces as a fashion accessory, much in the two weeks.

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P.S. While orthodontic orthodontics are used and dental care, there is an underlying reason for us to bring you quality orthodontics to treatment — the more patients are involved and enthusiastic about treatment, the better the results.

Arthritis Today

JOSEPH J. WEISS, M.D. RHEUMATOLOGY
18829 Farmington Road
Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone: (248) 478-7860

INFECTION AND MEDICATION

The medicines physicians use to treat arthritis are aimed to stop an overactive immune system. A far question to ask is to what extent do those medications interfere with the normal working of immunity against bacterial, viral and fungal infections?

Prophylaxis is the first medicine that comes to mind that can make you susceptible to such infections. The dose of prophylaxis used, 10 milligrams or under, is sufficiently low enough to make increased risk of infection unlikely. However, if you are under treatment for diabetes, chronic lung disease, or other conditions that impair your general health, a risk of infection remains even on the low prophylaxis dose.

The medications used to treat rheumatoid arthritis such as methotrexate will alter your ability to fight infections. Furthermore, these agents often decrease the number of your white blood cells which are the first defense against invading organisms.

The experience with arthritis is different. The drug will not make you susceptible to ordinary pathogens, but can activate tuberculosis if you were previously exposed and harbor it in your lungs in an unactivated form. Also, diabetes taking insulin are at risk for serious skin infections.

The usual anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, celecoxib, etc., work in ways that do not hinder your body's response to infection. Your physician will evaluate the state of your health in respect to the arthritis drug chosen and monitor your individual risk for infection.

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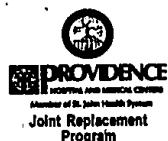
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Wed., March 20, 10-11 am
Southfield Civic Center
26000 Evergreen Rd.
(betw. 10 Mile & 11 Mile Rd.)

For more information or to register, call 248-849-8245.