

MEDICAL BRIEFS

Prostate cancer study

Beaumont Hospital is recruiting volunteers for SELECT, or the "Selenium and Vitamin E Chemoprevention Trial." The research study, funded by the National Cancer Institute, will include more than 32,000 healthy men in North America and Puerto Rico to evaluate selenium (a micronutrient present in food and in supplements) and vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol), to determine their effectiveness in preventing prostate cancer.

Needed are African-American men at least 50 years of age and other men at least 55 years old. Participants must have no prior history of prostate cancer and must be in generally good health. Call Beaumont's Cancer Clinical Trials Office at (248) 561-7695 for more information.

Hospice workshops

Madonna University's hospice education department will offer its second annual Grief and Loss Summer Institute 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 22-24. The institute will feature three workshops:

■ **Thursday: Supporting Individuals Who Have Experienced Violent and Traumatic Loss** will assist counselors and bereavement support staff in understanding the dynamics and symptoms of trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome Disorder.

■ **Friday: Assisting Families in Grief** will examine gender and developmental differences in response to the different aspects of family intervention.

■ **Saturday: Compassion Fatigue: Emotional and Spiritual Self-Care for Professionals** will help mental health professionals to reaffirm the value of self-care in order to care for others.

The workshops will be conducted by Jack LoCicero, Ph.D., a nationally certified grief therapist and death educator, and associate professor of hospice education at Madonna University. Cost: \$85 per workshop. Participants can earn up to 5.5 Continuing Education credits.

Space is limited. Room and board is available at Madonna's Residence Hall for \$50 per night. For room accommodations, call Sr. Nancy Jaramoz at (734) 432-5429. For more information about the institute, contact Dr. LoCicero at (734) 432-5471 or e-mail: jlocicero@madonna.edu.

Beat the heat

With temperatures continuing to climb into the nineties, the Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross urges people to take precautions in order to avoid heat-related illness. Here are some tips to stay safe while having fun in the sun:

■ **Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.** Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. Wear a hat or use an umbrella if in direct sunlight.

■ **Avoid strenuous activity.** If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m.

■ **Drink plenty of water regularly and often.** Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.

■ **Eat small meals and eat more often.** Avoid foods that are high in protein, which increase metabolic heat.

■ **Avoid using salt tablets** unless directed to do so by a physician.

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 Databook (upcoming calendar events), Medical Newsmakers (appointments/new hires in the medical field), and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies).

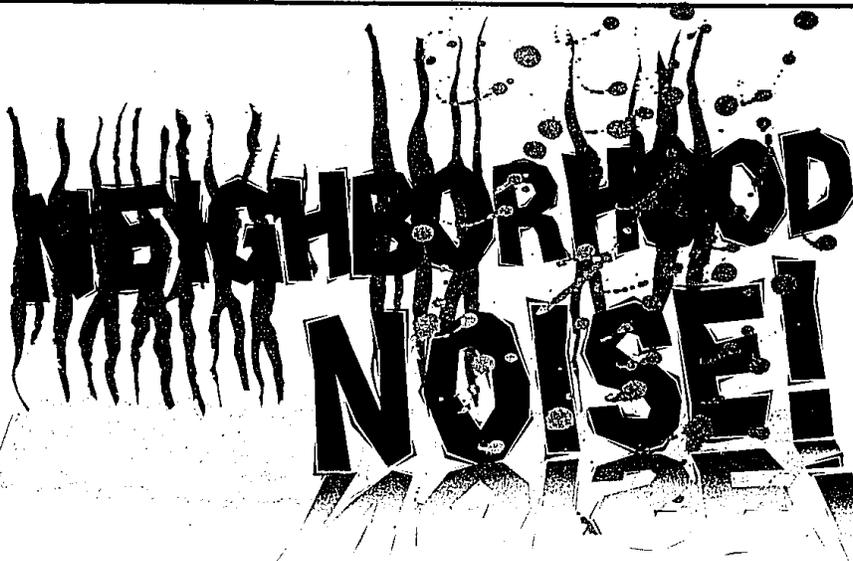
We also welcome newsworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

CALL:
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Americans are losing their hearing from too much noise

Noisemakers in our environment

The louder the noise, the less time required before hearing damage occurs. Listed below are the decibel levels of some of common noisemakers. Remember, noise levels above 85 dBA will harm hearing over time; noise levels above 140 dBA can cause damage after just one exposure.

Home

- Refrigerator, 50
- Washing machine, 60-75
- Dishwasher, 65-70
- Air conditioner, 69-75
- Electric shaver, 60-80
- Vacuum cleaner, 60-85
- Hair dryer, 60-95
- Ringing telephone, 80
- Garbage disposal, 80-95
- Baby crying, 110
- Noise squeeze toys

Work

- Quiet office, library, 40
- Hand saw, 85
- Electric drill, 95
- Snow blower, 105
- Power saw, 110
- Leaf blower, 110
- Pneumatic drill, 120
- Jackhammer, power drill, 130
- Percussion section at symphony, 130
- Jet engine taking off, 150

Recreation

- Quiet residential area, 40
- Heavy traffic, noisy restaurant, 85
- Motorcycle, 95-110
- Snowmobile, 100
- School dance, boom box, 100
- Rock concert, 110-120
- Stadium football game, 117
- Factory-installed auto stereo, 125
- Balloon pop, 167
- Fireworks at 3 feet, 162
- Handgun, 166

Source: Noise Center, League for the Hard of Hearing

By RENÉE SROGLUND
STAFF WRITER
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If you haven't noticed how NOISY your neighborhood has become this summer, perhaps you've already lost some hearing. Barking dogs, late-night pool parties, blasting radios, weed wackers and firecrackers rattle our nerves and assault our eardrums. Throw in routine construction and traffic noise and some of us are ready to put up the For Sale sign and head for the hills.

It's understandable. Noise — defined as "unwanted sound" — is more than a nuisance. It's a health hazard, causing serious physical and psychological stress.

"Loud noises increase the level of stress hormones, the cortisol and epinephrine. It causes basal constriction, and it can affect the heart and brain. It reduces blood supply to many areas," said Dr. Michael Seidmann, director, Division of Otolaryngology/Neurotology Surgery, Henry Ford Health System.

According to studies cited by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, steel workers and machine shop operators working in environments of high noise levels have a higher incidence of circulatory problems than do workers in quiet industries.

Fortunately most of us do not work in steel mills. However, we do work in noisy offices and come home to noisy neighborhoods. Noise-induced hearing loss is becoming "epidemic" in the United States, said Seidmann. "And people don't even realize it's an epidemic."

Some brains may be hard-wired for sensitivity to a certain sound, said Seidmann. The more susceptible people are to that sound — clinking silverware, for instance — the more intense their reaction. For Karin Reine of Canton, it's the continual high-pitched sounds that set her stress hormones in motion.

"A table saw is the most annoying," she said. But when it comes to noise, decibels are decibels, and the louder and more continuous the sound, the greater the potential health hazard. "What is pleasant to you might be poison to someone else. However, even if it's pleasant, it's still damaging," said Seidmann.

In other words, Mozart or Metallica could both pack a punch to our eardrums.

Decibels

Sound results from pressure changes in the air, caused by vibration or turbulence. Sound level, which is measured in decibels (dBA), refers to the

amplitude of these changes; frequency, the number of repetitive vibrations per second, is measured in "hertz" (Hz). Because sound level in decibels is a logarithmic rather than linear measure of pressure change, even a small increase in decibels can represent a large increase in sound energy.

In her report, Noise and Its Effects, to the

Administrative Conference of the United States in November 1991, Dr. Alice H. Suter, an audiologist at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, writes: "The ear perceives a 10-dBA increase as a doubling of loudness." A fact sheet on noise published by Ohio State University Extension adds more impact to the message: "The difference between 100 dBA of a garbage truck and 110 dBA of a race car presents an increase of more than 300 percent."

To understand decibel levels, consider that normal conversation measures 45-60 dBA and normal city or freeway traffic measures 70 dBA. In the workplace, sounds above 85 dBA (the level at which you must raise your voice in order to be heard) require monitoring by the Occupational Safety and Health Act if workers are exposed to them eight hours a day.

So what about your neighbor's screaming baby? The little tike will subject his or her parents to a whopping 115 dBA. Firecrackers? Get the earplugs. If you're in range, you'll be subjected to 150 dBA. The Noise Center of the league for the Hard of Hearing warns that noise levels above 85 dBA will harm your hearing over time. Noise levels above 140 dBA can cause damage to hearing after just one exposure.

Damage

Suter writes in *Noise and Its Effects*: "Although the incidence of noise-induced hearing loss from industrial populations is more extensively documented, there is growing evidence of hearing loss



Dr. Michael Seidmann

Please see NOISE, C8

Organ donations prevent the good from dying young

By TINA REID
SPECIAL WRITER

Mortality, our own or that of someone we love, is both frightening and unthinkable. Yet we all know it is inevitable. I'm writing about organ donation, a topic very close to my heart.

I lost my husband, Scott, less than two years ago because he had a liver disease called cirrhosis. He was 43 years old. Doctors told us that Scott was in the 20 percent of people with liver disease where the cirrhosis was not caused by heavy drinking. Often, people automatically assume that if you have cirrhosis, heavy drinking caused it. There are other reasons for liver disease, including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis and Autoimmune Hepatitis.

Scott had just 20 percent liver function. For a while, he did OK. But we were told he was not sick enough to be placed on the waiting list for a donated liver. Just think, if Scott could have had a liver transplant at that time,

he might still be alive today.

In a time frame of less than four years, Scott was diagnosed with cirrhosis and eventually with liver cancer. We were informed that liver cancer was normal if you had cirrhosis. Once the liver cancer started, the oncology team of doctors reviewed Scott's records. Sadly, I was instructed simply to take Scott home.

Lost organs

When an individual takes their organs with them after death, it is a lost opportunity for someone else to continue living. We don't use our organs after we die. If everyone would donate all their healthy organs, our organ donor registries would be nil. Just knowing that a loved one is keeping someone else alive is a very precious gift.

If Scott had had the opportunity to have a

Please see DONATIONS, C8

Gift of Life transplant statistics

The Transplantation Society of Michigan-Gift of Life provides the following statistics on those people awaiting an organ transplant as of July 1, 2002:

■ Kidney	1,769
■ Heart	76
■ Lung	84
■ Liver	384
■ Pancreas	87
■ TOTAL	2,419

Year-to-date:

Patients who received an organ transplant: 281
Patients who died waiting for a transplant: 88

In addition, every day hundreds of people in Michigan are in need of other tissues, such as heart valves, veins, tendons, bone, skin and corneas in order to survive or maintain their quality of life. To become a donor, you can:

- Talk to your family about your decision.
- Sign the Michigan Donor Registry. Registration cards are available at your Secretary of State Branch Office or by calling the Gift of Life Agency at (800) 482-4881.
- Sign the back of your driver's license.