

Annual Breast Health Expo promotes humor for healing

Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, Ann Arbor, will present its annual Breast Health Expo 5:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 1, at the Ellen Thompson Women's Health Center at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, 5301 East Huron River Drive, Ypsilanti.

Special guest speaker Lillie Shockney will share her personal experience with breast cancer and discuss the value of humor as a powerful weapon when confronted with cancer. Shockney is the author of *Breast Cancer Survivors' Club - a Nurse's Experience and director of Education and Outreach at Johns Hopkins Breast Center*. She is a nationally recognized expert in the field of clinical quality improvement and utilization management and is a public speaker and published author on both topics.

However, since having breast cancer and two mastectomies, her most popular request for presentations is for her discussion on the psychological impact this disease has on women, and her insight into the value of humor as a powerful weapon when confronted with cancer. She believes humor can become supplemental therapy when combined with a patient's medical and surgically prescribed treatment plan.

Shockney is the recipient of numerous awards including the Outstanding Women of America Award, Global Business Leadership Award, and Circle of Life Award from *Shape Magazine* and the National Race for the Cure. She was nominated for the Avon Breast Cancer Leadership Award and one of 30 women chosen to be featured in Maryland's American Cancer Society's Portraits of Hope. She has appeared on numerous television and radio programs.

The SJMHS Breast Health Expo will include health exhibits, door prizes and light refreshments. Admission is free but reservations are required. Please call the SJM HealthLine at (734) 712-5400 or toll-free at (800) 231-2211.

Human behavior is key to understanding germs

BY EMMA ROSS
AP MEDICAL WRITER

WARWICK, England (AP) - People come into contact with others up to 1,000 times more frequently than they did a century ago and infectious disease experts say scientists need to better understand human behavior and movements in the global battle against germs.

Scientists gathered at the annual meeting of Britain's infectious disease trackers heard Monday that while great strides have been made in vaccine and antibiotic development, the importance of human behavior and the way man interacts with microbes has been largely neglected.

Humans are constantly giving opportunities to microbes - viruses, bacteria, fungi and other bugs.

Measles has been recognized since at least the early 10th century A.D. Its emergence in the urban centers of the great civilizations did not occur because the measles virus changed. It occurred because human behavior changed, Dr. Mike Ryan, global outbreak and response coordinator at the World Health Organization, told scientists at the conference of the Public Health Laboratory Service.

"We talk about the battle against infectious diseases; the war on AIDS - we have become very focused on a military approach to the microbes," Ryan said. "The microbes must be eradicated, eliminated, beaten back - We overfocus on the microbes itself and less on the way our society behaves, the way we live and interact and how we can provide fewer opportunities for the microbes rather than attacking it."

But it isn't a battle to be finished and won, Ryan said. The success of the global eradication of smallpox in 1980 gave people a false sense of hope that such success could be repeated for every disease.

"HIV has shown us that it's a much more complicated disease than smallpox and it's not as easy to deal with," Ryan said. "You never win because microbes are part of nature. They will constantly emerge. If we come to terms with that and if we are smart and quick ... we'll be ahead of them."

The rate at which germs evolve is related to the rate of transmission of the bugs between humans, noted Dr. Roy Anderson, head of infectious disease epidemiology at Imperial College of Medicine in London.

"We understand very little about how the two are linked and about the forces that drive

When your child is bullied

Kelly, an elementary school student, knows all-too-well what it's like to be bullied. "I have been bullied by someone in my neighborhood and he's taken my lunch money and hit me a lot of times. He hates me and he won't leave my stuff alone."

Because of such situations, parents always need to be on the look-out for signs of bullying, especially since children often feel embarrassed about the situation and may be reluctant to tell their parents about the bully.

Some signs that a child may be the victim of a bully include:

- Making excuses for not wanting to go to school
- Difficulty sleeping or eating
- Increased anxiety about school or certain situations at school like riding the bus, using the restroom or going on recess
- Missing personal items

or the need for extra school supplies or money

- Excessive trips to the school nurse, especially during unstructured time like lunch or recess
- Unexplained bruises or torn clothing

To help a child deal with a bully, Dr. Paul Quinlan, director of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Inpatient Services at the University of Michigan Health System, says parents need to encourage their child to speak directly to the bully, but never to be physically defensive.

Parents need to provide extra support to boost their child's self-confidence, help them build social skills to avoid conflict and make friends, and encourage them to seek the help of an adult or friends when a bully is around.

KidHealth lists the following types of bullying on their Web site:

BULLIES
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"Bullying is something that needs to be dealt with in a very thorough manner," he said. "School systems and other programs that deal with children need to work to recognize and identify this problem behavior and offer assistance to the families."

Rhodes said dealing with bullying is now part of the Redford Union School District's code of conduct. The district also has several programs in place to ward off bullying beginning in elementary school.

However, if a teacher or school official fails to intervene, Carpenter says parents should consider taking their child out of school and appealing to the school board. Or, a parent may take a more personal approach. He or she may ask to meet with the bully in the principal's office and tell him or her to stop the aggressive behavior.

"It's reverse intimidation, but not harmful," said Carpenter. Carpenter does not advocate that child who is bullied retaliate physically against his or her tormentor since bullies are often bigger and stronger than their victims. He does encourage the child to respond verbally, to be assertive. That requires support, which comes from involved parents who acknowledge the problem.

"Kids need to know someone is on their team," he said. "Rather than bringing their child to me once a week, a parent needs to be the therapist in the home."

Quinlan suggests parents take a close look at where the bullying behavior is occurring - whether it is just happening in school or in unique settings. If the behavior is persistent during play activities, in school and at home, parents should consider getting a mental health referral from their pediatrician.

"The good news is there's good results with intervention," he said. "The situation will be controlled and parents can really begin to help their child."

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