

**MEDICAL DATEBOOK**

**Weight loss**  
The HMR Weight Management program at St. Mary Mercy Hospital offers weekly classes and support. Participants must attend an orientation class before enrolling. Upcoming orientation dates are: 4:30-5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10, and 4-5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 18. Call (734) 655-1193.

**Grief workshop**  
Angela Heslop in Livonia will offer two adult grief workshops 13 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. Monday, Dec. 9. For register, contact the Bereavement Department at (734) 464-7810 or (734) 953-6012.

**Diabetes**  
The Diabetes Support Group at St. Mary Mercy Hospital, Livonia, will host a discussion on "Handling the Highs and Lows during the Holidays" 7:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 11, in the hospital's Auditorium. The group presents a new topic on the second Wednesday of each month for adults diabetics and family members. There is no charge, and a registration fee is not required. Call (734) 655-8961 or visit [www.stmarymercy.org](http://www.stmarymercy.org).

**Homeopathy**  
The Tree House for Earth's Children, 22906 Mooney Street, Farmington, offers an "Introduction Class on Homeopathy" 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14. Learn about natural remedies for colds, cough, allergies, aches and pains, indigestion, colic, asthma, depression and sexual problems, and more. Cost: \$50. Call (248) 473-0624.

**Arthritis**  
Reform-based Physician Outreach will present a seminar on "Arthritis: How to Increase Your Flexibility and Mobility" for seniors 10 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 17, at the Beryn Senior Center in Dearborn Heights. Limited to the first 25 guests. Call Eileen at (313) 277-7054.

**ONGOING**

**Self-Help groups**  
Anyone seeking information on a variety of self-help groups may call the Michigan Self-Help Clearing House at (877) 777-5556.

**Grief support**  
Angela Heslop offers ongoing grief support groups every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at the center, 14100 Newburgh Road, Livonia. The next meetings is 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Dec. 10. Call (734) 464-7810.

**Bipolar**  
The MDA Bipolar Support Group meets 3-5 p.m. the second and fourth Thursday at Beaumont Hospital, Administration Bldg., 3601 W. 13 Mile Road, Royal Oak. Call Kathie at (248) 544-1077.

**Divorce support**  
The Women's Resource Center at Schoolcraft College will offer a "Divorce Support Group" 7-9 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Call the WRC at (734) 462-4443.

**Bereavement**  
"Together to Share," a grief support group, meets 10 a.m. the first Monday

**Avoid a stroke in just 10 minutes**

Residents living in and around the Southfield and Birmingham communities can be screened to reduce their risk of stroke. Life Line Screening will be at the American House Southfield, 27277 Lahser, Dec. 18 and the American House Birmingham, 110 North Adams Road, Dec. 20. Appointments will begin at 9 a.m.

A stroke, also known as a "brain attack," is ranked as the third leading killer in the world, and the second among women. Through preventive screenings, the risk of having a stroke can be greatly reduced.

Screenings are fast, painless and low cost. They involve the use of ultrasound technology and scan for potential health problems related to: blocked arteries, which can lead to a stroke; aortic aneurysms, which can lead to a ruptured aorta; and hardening of the arteries in the legs, which are a strong predictor of heart disease.

A bone density screening is also offered for men and women to assess their risk for osteoporosis.

Each screening requires ten minutes or less to complete and costs \$40. A complete vascular screening package is \$99, which is a saving of \$21, and includes the Carotid/Stroke Artery screening, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm and Ankle Brachial Index screenings. Sign-up for a complete vascular screening, including the osteoporosis screening, and pay only \$125, a savings of \$30.

Life Line Screening was established in 1993, and has since become the nation's leading provider of vascular screenings. Over 45 ultrasound teams are on staff to travel to your local community, bringing the screenings to you. These non-invasive, inexpensive and painless, ultrasound tests help people identify their risk for stroke, vascular diseases or osteoporosis early enough for their physician to begin preventive procedures.

For more information regarding the screenings or to schedule an appointment, call (800) 643-6188. Pre-registration is required.

**WEIGHT**

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were at the start of the season," Clays says. "You should plan to continue your weight-loss efforts as soon as possible after the holiday season ends."

This dedicated Weight Watchers leader wants to help you with your healthy holiday menu planning by providing you with recipes that are not only good, but low in calories and points. (Weight Watchers uses the "Winning Points" approach to weight loss.) E-mail her at [sclay@ameritech.net](mailto:sclay@ameritech.net).

**OTHER HEALTHY HOLIDAY TIPS**

Keeping a positive attitude during the holidays - and every day - is also one of the best tips offered by Sarah Irving, a registered dietitian with the Beaumont Weight Control Center.

Irving offers these other tips:

- Preplanning is the key to success. "Identify those foods or situations which pose the biggest challenge for you. Then develop strategies to cope with these foods and situations."
- Plan fun activities to stay active. "Exercise can be a fun thing to do. You can do such things as playing in the snow or walking the mall while enjoying all the holiday decorations."
- Create a non-food holiday

tradition. "Instead of baking cookies, make ornaments, wreaths or other decorations."

- Avoid hanging around the food table. Often if food is out-of-sight, it's out-of-mind. If you stay away from the food, you're less tempted to eat it.
- Limit your alcohol consumption. "Alcohol adds extra calories. A regular (12 ounce) beer, for example, has 150 calories. Limit your alcoholic drinks by having a glass of water or a non-alcoholic beverage in between."
- Don't skip meals. Oftentimes, when you skip a meal (or meals) to save the calories for parties, you tend to overeat, even binge, when you get to the party. Eat healthy and low-calorie foods the day of the event so that you can better control what you eat when you get to the party.
- Don't forget to drink plenty of water. Water fills you up and, oftentimes, when you think you're hungry, you're just thirsty.
- Send leftovers home with your guests. Remember: Out of sight, out of mind.

**FINAL THOUGHT**

I was told early on in my weight-loss journey that when making a trip to the buffet table, follow behind the slimmest woman at the gathering and put your plate only what this person puts on hers. This, I was told, would guarantee that I

**BEVERAGES**

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sium and calcium, leading to bone loss. In a study of over 90,000 women, those who consumed the most caffeine had three times greater risk for hip fracture than those who consumed little or no caffeine.

In the digestive tract, excess caffeine can cause or worsen irritable bowel syndrome, ulcers, inflammation of the esophagus, heartburn, and hiatal hernia. During digestion, caffeine reduces iron absorption and can lead to anemia. One cup of coffee can reduce iron absorption by 39 percent.

For women, too much caffeine can cause sore breasts and PMS; these symptoms often disappear when caffeine is stopped. Health Wisdom for Women reports that caffeine has been shown to increase the rate of miscarriage and low-birth-weight babies.

**SOFT DRINKS**

Many persons, including teenagers, drink carbonated beverages, both diet and regular. These carbonated beverages also present health hazards - even those without caffeine.

Dr. Jonathan Ewer, a chiropractor from Latrobe, Pa., has

seen osteoporosis fractures in 13-year-old girls and men who consume large amounts of carbonated soft drinks. Phosphoric acid in soft drinks increases the risk for bone loss, because it reacts with calcium to make it insoluble.

Sugared soft drinks raise the potential for obesity. A 20-oz. soft drink contains around 250 calories, which represents 1/8 of the daily caloric intake recommended for either an elementary school student or the average woman. A person who drinks three 20-oz. sugared soft drinks weekly and does not increase physical activity may gain seven pounds a year.

Diet drinks that contain aspartame increase the levels of dopamine in the brain; too much dopamine causes anxiety and headaches.

**WATER**

Plain water is a great choice, because it enhances health. According to Dr. Batmangholidj in *Your Body's Many Cries for Water*, drinking more water is a simple way to decrease hypertension. It also increases fluid in the joints, thereby lessening the pain and stiffness of arthritis. Water restores fluid balance in the bowels, which reduces heartburn and constipation. It also hydrates the respiratory tract to

decrease sinus problems, asthma, and the potential for infection.

In the book *Overcoming Arthritis*, West Bloomfield physician Dr. David Brownstein recommends drinking one ounce of water for every two pounds of body weight. If you eat many fruits and vegetables, you may need less water. You are drinking enough water when your urine is the color of pale lemonade. If you have congestive heart or kidney problems, consult your physician before drinking more water.

Water fights fatigue. Hikers find that they can hike longer when they carry and drink water than when they don't. Thus, you can fight holiday stress (and save money) by switching from caffeinated beverages and soft drinks to water.

For more information about food, beverages, and the brain, Baumann teaches a class, "Feed the Brain for Learning and Memory" at Henry Ford Community College on Saturdays, Feb. 8 and 9. Register by calling toll-free (877) 855-5252.

Sandy Baumann has a master's degree in biochemistry and is the author of *Help Me Find My Memory*. She has served as a college biochemistry instructor, a health editor, and a director of senior health promotion at a local hospital. You may write her at [emergingfree2002@yahoo.com](mailto:emergingfree2002@yahoo.com).

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Are you a former smoker? Do you still smoke? Are you healthy and between the ages of 55 and 74?

The Henry Ford Health System is looking for people like you to join the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST). Smoking puts men and women at risk for lung cancer. NLST is comparing spiral CT scans to chest X-rays to find out if one is more effective than the other at lowering lung cancer deaths.

**NLSI** NATIONAL LUNG SCREENING INSTITUTE

For more information, please call Henry Ford Health System at 1-888-883-8483

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