

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. The next orientation class is 4:30-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 18. Call (734) 655-1793.

Blood drive
The Red Cross will hold a blood drive 2-8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16, at the Plymouth Church of Christ, 9301 Sheldon Road, Plymouth. Walk-in welcome. Call (734) 453-7630.

Artthritis
Redford-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 Berwyn 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
Ann Arbor Hospice offers ongoing grief support groups every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at the center, 14000 Newburgh Road, Livonia. The next meetings are 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Dec. 10. Call (734) 464-7810.

Bipolar
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) 544-1097.

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 of each month at American House on Middlebelt Road in Livonia. The group meets 1 p.m. the third Thursday of the month at Dorvin Nursing Center on Middlebelt Road in Livonia. Both groups are facilitated by a bereavement coordinator from Heartland Hospice in Southfield. Call (800) 710-9959.

Overeaters Anonymous
Support group for overeaters meets 7 p.m. every Friday at Providence Park-Novi, 47601 Grand River Avenue, Novi. HelpLine: (313) 438-HELP or (248) 474-9454.

Alcoholics Anonymous
Everyone is welcome to the AA meetings held at noon every Tuesday and Thursday at Providence Medical Office Center-Novi, 39500 W. 10 Mile Road (at Hagerty), Novi. Call (248) 346-9362. AA meetings also hold noon every Wednesday at Mission Health Medical Center-Livonia, 37595 Seven Mile Road.

Livonia, Call (734) 953-1188.

Thyroid cancer
Thyroid Cancer Survivors Association, Inc. support group meets 7-8:30 a.m. the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Plymouth Public Library, 223 S. Main Street, downtown Plymouth. In the Gold Room, for more information about the ThyCa SE Michigan Support Group, call Mary Rose at (734) 397-2801 or e-mail: SE-MI@thyca.org. For more information on thyroid cancer and other free support services, visit www.thyca.org or call toll free (877) 588-7904.

HRT
FROM PAGE C6

uterine lining with a form of progesterone, in this case MPA.

2. Hormone replacement with Prempro appears to have a less favorable risk/benefit profile than other replacement preparations, particularly those that are non-oral and those in which a progestin component is not used continuously.

Studies completed following the commencement of the HERS II and WHI trials suggest that the specific combination in Prempro demonstrated both a less favorable effect on coronary arteries than other regimens and a small but significant excess of a relatively uncommon form of breast cancer, which has not been associated with use of other forms of hormone replacement.

Had this information been available, it is unlikely that HERS II or WHI studies would have been initiated.

3. The weight of previous research utilizing other regimens of hormone replacement has suggested a more positive outcome. The commentary in the HERS II and WHI studies stated that it was "possible" the unexpected negative findings were due to the combination in Prempro. Surprisingly, the researchers included all forms of hormone replacement in their conclusions and recommendations. Dr. Wulf 11. Utian,

executive director and honorary founding president of The North American Menopause Society and a pioneer in menopause research, stated that the financial relationship existing between authors of both studies and Wyeth-Ayerst (the manufacturer of Prempro) raised issues of ethics and potential bias.

4. Physicians are encouraging women to stop using HRT, without a legitimate rationale. This is an irresponsible and potentially life-altering recommendation. The director of the WHI study, Dr. Jacques E. Rossouw, of the National Institutes of Health, said it was his impression that few physicians had actually read the studies or had an in-depth knowledge of the details or conclusions. Rossouw went on to say that appropriate hormone replacement does not cause breast cancer or coronary artery disease and that he is "comfortable" with this type of hormone use "for as long as it is necessary."

5. The big losers are menopausal women who have been deterred from using hormone replacement as a valuable health care and quality-of-life-enhancing strategy.

Dr. Trudy L. Bush, who was one of the nation's preeminent researchers and teachers of issues related to women's health - particularly the effects of hormones and replacement therapy on the cardiovascular and reproductive systems -

Quitting smoking is hard but not impossible

The New Year is a time when many of us make resolutions to change our lives for the better. Unfortunately, the decision to end a tobacco habit is a resolution that some smokers re-use year after year. However, with the right coaching, there's hope even for smokers who repeatedly try and fail to quit, says Edwin B. Fisher, professor of psychology in Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis and director of the Division for Health Behavior Research at the university's School of Medicine.

Fisher, a psychologist who counsels patients on smoking cessation, weight control and chronic disease care, has spent more than 20 years researching self-management and self-control. He offers tips on quitting and keeping a smoke-free New Year's resolution.

"There tends to be a lot of chaos in our lives during the holiday season and this chaos can undermine our best efforts to change our lifestyles," said Fisher, who is also a professor of medicine and of ped-

iatrics at the School of Medicine and associate director for cancer prevention and control at the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center at the medical school and Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. "So maybe that's a good reason to think of quitting during January rather than quitting on Dec. 31."

By thinking of the month of January as the time for change, smokers who want to quit can use the momentum of the New Year without forcing themselves to try to quit during the craziness of the holiday season itself. Quitting smoking is hard, Fisher says, because nicotine is so addictive and because most smokers have woven the activity of smoking cigarettes into so many aspects of their lives.

"It's a hard thing to do, but it's also very doable," adds Fisher, who is the author of the American Lung Association's 7 Steps to a Smoke-Free Life. About 50 percent of all adults who have smoked in this country have quit smoking. As a matter of fact, the

average individual who has quit smoking successfully has tried two or three times and failed before.

While there is no single formula for quitting, Fisher offers the following suggestions.

- Set a clear "quit date" that makes sense for you personally, such as a birthday or some other personal milestone. Choose a Monday morning if you smoke most on the weekends, or a Friday afternoon if you're tempted most at the office.
- Anticipate the situations in which you're going to be tempted to relapse and have a concrete plan - not a wish and a prayer - but a concrete plan for how you're going to cope with those temptations.
- Recruit the help of other people. No one else can do it for you, but the cooperation and encouragement of those around you can really help you get a hard job done much better.

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