

Rx Briefs

Wanted: Nurses

On Sunday, Feb. 23, the University of Michigan Health System will host the "Passion for Nursing Career Fair" 1-4 p.m. in the Townsley Center of the U-M Hospital. The event, which follows the success of UMHS's initiative to hire 100 nurses in 100 days, hopes to recruit more nurses in preparation for continued growth. Openings are available in many adult and pediatric inpatient areas and the operating rooms.

The fair will include meetings with nursing managers, on-site interviews and a tour of some of the facilities where UMHS nurses work. Free parking will be available for participants in U-M Hospital parking structure A. Since 1975, UMHS staff nurses have been represented by the Michigan Nurses Association, which calls UMHS salaries the "most competitive in the Michigan nursing labor market." All UMHS staff nurses receive U-M retirement benefits, under which a 5 percent salary contribution by an employee is met with a 10 percent contribution by the university. To learn more about nursing at the UMHS, call (877) NURSE UMHS, or e-mail NurseRecruit_UMHS@med.umich.edu.

Massage-a-thon

Irene's Myomassology Institute in Southfield will host its fifth annual massage-a-thon March 14-16 at 2606 Franklin Road in Southfield. The 48-hour event will offer free one-hour massages. All donations received will benefit Lighthouse PAHT, a shelter that provides homeless women and children with transitional housing, education and job training.

The nonstop event will begin 7 p.m. Friday, March 14, and end 7 p.m. Sunday, March 16. "The community has been very supportive of this event throughout the years. In 2002, we generated over \$20,000, and this year we are aiming for \$25,000," said Kathy Gauthier, director of Irene's Myomassology Institute. Irene's Myomassology Institute expects to give more than 450 massages with the help of 150 volunteer students and instructors. In addition, each student volunteer raised pledges from the community for the massages given during their six-hour shift. Irene's is taking massage-a-thon appointments. Walk-ins are welcome. To avoid waiting, call Irene's Myomassology Institute at (248) 350-1400.

Leukemia event

Leukemia Research Life Inc. (known as LRL Inc.) formed in 1991 by a diverse group of parents whose children had cancer, will sponsor its 22nd Annual Evening of Hope 6 p.m. Saturday, March 8, at the Burton Manor in Livonia. The event includes dinner, dancing and a silent and chance auction with the theme "Hearts in Harmony."

Stewart Franke, renowned Detroit jazz musician and cancer survivor, will be the honorary chair. Although their initial fight was directed at leukemia, members of LRL quickly realized that the battle must be waged on all childhood cancers. LRL consistently devoted 96 percent of each dollar earned exclusively to research at Children's Hospital of Michigan. Tickets to the dinner auction are available by calling (313) 884-0931 or visiting www.lrlinc.org.

BEYOND DIETING EATING DISORDERS CAN KILL

Many teens struggle with anorexia, bulimia

BY KATHIE O'DONNUE
CORRESPONDENT

When Westland resident Lily (not her real name) was 17 years old, she envied the thin, popular girls at school.

So she stopped eating to get thin like they were. At dinner she hid food in her napkin, exercised vigorously several times daily, and stuck her finger down her throat after meals to make herself vomit.

Lily hid her skeletal body with layers of clothes, but one day her mother walked into the room while the teen was dressing. "She freaked out," Lily said of her mother. "My normal weight was about 130 pounds and I had gone down to 77."

She was diagnosed with two eating disorders, anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, and through "lots of counseling," a supportive family and a desire to end her destructive behaviors, Lily regained her health.

Though now, at age 37, she has recovered and said her days of starvation, bingeing and purging are over, Lily still struggles with thinking she is fat. "Eating disorders are becoming more common; roughly of 18 percent of first-year students in colleges (have) eating disorders," said psychiatrist and eating disorder specialist Dr. Alexander Sackeyflo, who is coordinator for in-patient treatment for eating disorders at Beaumont Hospital.

While he sees more anorexia in his practice, Sackeyflo said bulimia is more common in the general population. "The difference: Anorexics starve themselves until becoming extremely thin, but may still believe they're overweight. Bulimics, on the other hand, may maintain a normal weight, but binge (consume large amounts of food) and purge (vomit, use laxatives or enemas)."

"There is a lot of testing (being) done; there are genetic markers," said Sackeyflo. "Personality traits like perfectionism and environmental factors are also linked to the genetic codes. Put all the factors together, you create an illness."

DISTORTED PERCEPTIONS

Genetic links to eating disorders may cause less parental blame; it was once a



Dr. Alexander Sackeyflo says that sometimes anorexia is seen by young people as way to survive in the world.

common belief that anorexia was the result of problems or issues in the family.

Now doctors are looking at other possible factors.

"Anorexia might be one of the ways young people can survive in this world," said Sackeyflo. "They can't control anxiety. At some point they realize they are not eating enough, and they realize they feel much better (by not eating). To try to control feeling better, they don't eat."

Bulimics are usually given antidepressants and are taught how to eat properly without purging. Anorexics are usually hospitalized and put on a high calorie, high protein diet, sometimes with tube feedings in the hospital in serious cases.

The treatment goal is to help the anorexic achieve 95 percent of her ideal weight. Once weight is up, treatment includes anti-depressants to help deal with psychological issues related to anorexic behavior.

With eating disorders there is a distorted perception of one's body image: A person may see herself as fat even when he or she is dangerously thin.

There can be serious health consequences with eating disorders including irreversible brain damage, problems with the heart and kidneys, and loss of bone tissue.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Eating Disorders program Beaumont Hospital, 248-551-5000
- EDEN (Eating Disorders & Education Network), Alice Grisham, (810) 750-2106
- <http://comnet.org/eden/>
- <http://www.eating-disorder.org/scared.html>
www.nationaleatingdisorder.org
- <http://centerforchange.com/edaw/>
- http://www.ability.org.uk/Eating_Disorders.html
- http://dmoz.org/Health/Mental_Health/Disorders/Eating/Support_Groups/

A person's memory and ability to concentrate, form concepts, and do arithmetic may be affected.

"Sometimes a 38-year old may think (like) an Alzheimer's patient," said Sackeyflo.

Eating disorders account for the third most common reason for death in psychiatry, and according to Sackeyflo, 5-15 percent of those with eating disorders will die.

Carrie (not her real name), a 34-year-old Oakland County resident developed anorexia at age 19, and eventually became bulimic as well. She still struggles with her eating disorders. At her height of 5 feet, 6 inches, Carrie currently weighs 110 pounds, but at one point her weight dropped to 79 pounds and she was hospitalized.

"They didn't help me," Carrie said. "They put me on a psych ward, and I was in group therapy with people I could not relate to at all. It was very inappropriate."

She gained several pounds, was released from the hospital, but quickly returned to bingeing/purging and starvation/laxative use.

Carrie explained that she starves herself during the day and binges later at night. A typical meal might include two

boxes of macaroni and cheese and two sandwiches. She then makes herself vomit and often uses laxatives which she said she is addicted to.

When asked if she wants to get better, Carrie said she isn't sure. "I've lived this way for so long ... I'm scared to change."

GAINING SELF-ESTEEM

In spite of her fear, Carrie sought help from an Ann Arbor-based nonprofit support organization called "EDEN" an acronym for Eating Disorders Education Network. Carrie believes the group will help her gain self-esteem and develop a more positive self-image. "When you feel better about yourself, you feel you deserve to eat," Carrie said.

EDEN founder Alice Grisham suffered with anorexia and bulimia for over 30 years. As an overweight adolescent, she was teased by peers, and she stopped eating. When her mother eventually found out and forced her to eat, Grisham's anorexia then evolved into bulimia.

"You can look normal with bulimia, but it's deceiving. You can be very sick,

PLEASE SEE EATING DISORDERS, C7

New patch relieves low libido in women

It's not a subject that most women feel comfortable discussing amongst themselves or sometimes even with their partners. However, low sexual libido, a previously understudied condition, is starting to gain more attention from women and medical researchers alike.

This diminished sexual desire often occurs in both men and women with advancing age and can result from a number of biologic and psychological circumstances. For women, who are twice as likely as men to experience low libido, it is often an unfortunate consequence of a hysterectomy and, ironically, estrogen therapies used to treat menopause-related symptoms like hot flashes and insomnia.

Additionally, low libido can lead to feelings of unhappiness, concern and frustration, plus it can have a major

impact on a woman's relationship with her partner.

Although there are currently no medications approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of low female libido, women experiencing a decreased sexual desire shouldn't give up hope.

A new one-year study being conducted by the University of Michigan Health System's Women's Health Program, as well as at other sites throughout the U.S., Canada and Australia, may help bring relief to women experiencing low libido.

The study will examine whether or not a testosterone patch can improve low libido in post-menopausal women who have experienced a decline in their sexual well-being. This new investigational therapy, developed

by Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals, is a thin, nearly transparent patch worn on the abdomen.

POSITIVE EFFECT

The idea of using the male hormone testosterone to treat low libido in women may seem unusual, but it's a concept that's been around for several decades. Since the 1930s, experts have studied the role that testosterone plays in maintaining women's sexual desire and well-being. And, after subsequent research, it has been confirmed that testosterone does have a substantial impact on women's sexual health.

PLEASE SEE LIBIDO, C7