

# Physician debunks toxic shock myths

by KAYE BARTON BAKKE  
Post Correspondent

A Gresham physician addressed a special assembly of female students and staff at Sandy Union High School on Tuesday and debunked a few myths about the much-publicized "toxic shock syndrome."

It is not true that males do not need to worry about the condition, said Marcella Flores, an emergency room physician at Gresham Community Hospital — 96 percent of cases reported occurred in women, but men are not exempt.

Nor is it true that if a female is not menstruating, or does not use tampons she is free from danger. Flores said the extensive media coverage of the relatively new, highly mysterious illness, and its emphasis on the statistics which link the

syndrome with tampon usage, have created a "false security" in some women.

"They say, 'I don't use tampons, so I'm not going to get toxic shock syndrome,'" she said, "but that's not true."

Toxic shock syndrome is a flu-like condition with a distinctive set of symptoms first identified in medical literature in November, 1978. The original report was based on seven cases, involving patients from the ages of eight to 17 years. Three of the seven were males.

More recent research has linked the syndrome with tampon usage during menstruation, and one major manufacturer of a popular brand of tampons withdrew them from the market.

Flores acknowledged that 95 percent of the women afflicted with the syndrome are stricken with symptoms

during their menstrual periods or shortly thereafter.

But she also cited examples of pre-adolescent and post-menopausal females contracting the illness, in addition to the cases reported among males.

An organism known as staphylococcus aureus has been linked statistically with the syndrome, although Flores said she couldn't list staph aureus as a cause. Men and non-menstruating women who contract the illness usually have abscesses or skin infections somewhere on their bodies in which staph aureus is involved, she said.

Flores pointed out that up to 17 percent of the general female population have staph aureus present in their vaginal tract or nasal passages, but that these women did not have a greater risk of being stricken by toxic shock syndrome.

In response to a barrage of questions aimed at her following the presentation, Flores said that use of birth control pills seems to offer women some protection against the disease, judging by statistical patterns.

She said there is no indication the disease can be transmitted through sexual intercourse. The most effective treatment for the syndrome found so far is the use of beta lactamase antibiotics, the doctor said. If symptoms are diagnosed early enough, there is a likelihood of full recovery with no permanent effects.

"The most important thing is for you to be able to recognize the symptoms of toxic shock syndrome," she told the women. "If you have symptoms like the flu, but worse than you've ever had before, that is the time to seek medical attention."

Symptoms include fever and a rash over the body which looks like sunburn. There may be vomiting or diarrhea at the onset of the illness, a tendency to easy bruising, or redness of the mucous membranes.

Flores said most of the fatalities result from kidney failure and the acute lowering of blood pressure which accompanies the illness. Fatalities occur in five to 10 percent of the cases reported.

Flores has been employed at Gresham Community Hospital for four years. She was a 1973 graduate of University of California Medical School at San Francisco.

John McMahan, principal at SUHS, said the presentation was videotaped and will be made available to interested groups within the community.

## Busy board delays hearing

Members of Sandy Union High School District's board met four times in eight days Jan. 5 through 12. The first three sessions were budget committee meetings, with the most recent being the regular monthly board meeting.

The budget committee is comprised of the five district board members and five private citizens. The committee completed its examination of the budget document Friday, Jan. 9.

The next budget meeting will be held tonight, Jan. 15, in Rooms 50-51 at the high school. The committee will begin deliberation on the budget document and consideration of items for the "B" ballot in the March 31 levy election.

During Monday night's board meeting, a hearing on the dismissal of teacher Joan Ferdun, originally scheduled for Jan. 15, was postponed for two weeks at the request of Mrs. Ferdun's attorneys.

District Superintendent Jack Peters reported that the district's secretary Glenda Carmony submitted her resignation effective Jan. 16. Carmony will remain on the job until a replacement can be found.

Board Chairman Pete

Griffin said, "I hate to see Glenda leave. She's done a wonderful job." Carmony has worked for the district five years, in her present capacity 3½ years.

Peters also reported that an at-large position on the school board will be included on the March 31 ballot. The position is currently filled by Paul Tucker from the Bull Run Elementary School District. Deadline for candidates to file with the county election board is Feb. 24.

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DALE NICHOLLS

## Local realtor named director of state group

A local man has been named state director of the Oregon Association of Realtors.

The appointment of Dale Nicholls, president of Pioneer Real Estate of Sandy, was announced last Friday by James Riggle, president of the Clackamas County Board of Realtors.

Nicholls has a long history of Realty Board service and leadership. He served as president of the Palmdale, Calif., Board of Realtors in 1965 and received the distinguished "Realtor of the Year Award."

From 1964 through 1966, he served as a state director of the California Real Estate Association. For the past nine years, he has been a director and officer of the Clackamas County Board.

Nicholls entered the real estate business in 1957 and has owned and operated his own real estate business. Nicholls entered the real estate business in 1957 and has owned and operated his own real estate firm for more than 20 years. He opened Nicholls Real Estate in Sandy in 1967.

He later purchased Pioneer Real Estate which is located in Pioneer Square at the corner of Scales Avenue and Proctor Boulevard.

## Dump site for Christmas tree announced

A local site has been named as a collection point for old Christmas trees.

Sandy residents who are searching for a place to discard their used tree may take it to 17771 Tupper Road, adjacent to the Tupper Park site, within the next week and it will be disposed of.

## The Sandy Post

(USPS 481-180)

MEMBER Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, National Newspaper Association and U.S. Suburban Press  
Published weekly Thursdays by The Outlook Publishing Co., Box 68, Sandy, Oregon 97055. Second class postage paid at Sandy, Oregon.

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Sandy Post, Sandy, Oregon 97055 No. 3 JAN. 15, 1981

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