

# Health & SCIENCE



## Center launches Stroke prevention study

The Detroit Medical Center is the only medical center in Michigan participating in an extensive, multi-state study of stroke prevention medications in the African-American community.

Under the title the African-American Antiplatelet Stroke Prevention Study (AAASPS), the project is designed to accomplish what, historically speaking, few other large stroke studies have done.

All participants will be African-American and as such, all the data produced will relate to African-Americans.

"There have been numerous stud-

ies about stroke, but in many cases, African-Americans were not well represented in the data," said Dr. Seemant Chaturvedi, Harper Hospital neurologist, co-director of the acute stroke unit and assistant professor of neurology at Wayne State University. "With this study we will focus on that portion of the population that is at highest risk for stroke," he added.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States with a half million people suffering strokes each year, resulting in 150,000 deaths.

Most strokes are the result of a blood clot formed in the brain or

from the heart the blocks and artery to the brain. In the African-American population, the risk of having a stroke is twice as high as the risk in the general population. Also, African-Americans suffer more complications. The AAASPS will recruit 1,800 African-Americans who have suffered a stroke up to 90 days prior to entering the study. Potential participants will undergo a screening examination and laboratory tests to determine their eligibility. Study related medical care, medications and lab tests are free.

The multi-year study is designed to compare the effectiveness of two

medications, aspirin and ticlopidine, in the prevention of recurrent stroke. Both have been approved by Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for that use. These medications belong to a group of drugs that render platelets, a component of blood that is important for clotting, less sticky, decreasing their tendency to form clots within blood vessels. Once in the study patients will randomly assigned to one of the stroke prevention treatments of either aspirin or ticlopidine.

"We can be very assured that the data we are collecting is quite accurate. Also, in our study every patient receives medication that has been shown to be a good treatment for preventing another stroke," add Chaturvedi. For more AAASPS information, call 313-577-4244.

## Free! Free!

### Learn CPR from Portland Firefighters

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) instruction on September 21st, 9:30 a.m., at the Matt Dishman Community Center (77 NE Knott)

Includes adult, child, and infant CPR and Choking techniques.

This class is designed for people with little or no prior First Aid or CPR training. For more information, call 823-3698.

This class has been made possible by a generous grant from the Columbia-Willamette Area Health Education Center.

## Healthvan cruises your neighborhood

The Adventist Medical Center Healthvan travels to various Portland-area locations each month, offering free and low-cost health testing, screenings and education.

Services are open to the public at each site.

-Sept. 6--United Way DAY OF CARING, Pioneer Courthouse Square, 701 SW 6th Ave., 11:15am-1:30pm. 228-9131.

-Sept. 8--Race for the Cure, Waterfront Park, Front Avenue. 423-2365.

-Sept. 10--Fringe Benefits Fair, David Douglas High School, 1500

SE 130th. 261-8225.

-Sept. 15--American Heart Walk, Springwater Corridor Trail, 1200 N Main, Gresham, OR. 233-0100.

-Sept. 20--"Spirit Summit" Regional Drug Initiative, Salvation Army (Moore Center), 5335 N Williams Avenue. 294-7074.

-Sept. 22--Fujitsu Classic 8K Benefit Run, Main City Park, Gresham, OR. 251-6162.

-Sept. 24--Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 NE 40th. 288-8303.

-Sept. 26--Value Village, 82nd & SE Foster. 771-5472.

## Your liver lets you live

By Larry Lucas

Did you know that your liver is the largest organ in your body?

Located behind the lower ribs on the right side of the abdomen, the liver weighs about 3 pounds and is about the size of a football.

Without a liver, you couldn't live. It performs several vital functions, including:

- converting food into chemicals needed for life and growth;
- producing substances used by the rest of the body;
- processing drugs into forms usable by the body;
- detoxifying substances that would otherwise be poisonous;
- storing important vitamins and minerals, including iron.

Since you can't do without your liver, you'll want to take good care of it.

One way to do this is to protect your liver against hepatitis.

The word "hepatitis" means inflammation of the liver, usually causing swelling and tenderness and, sometimes, permanent damage to the liver.

Hepatitis is a virus, which is spread from one affected person to

another. In the U.S. alone, there are more than four million "carriers" of hepatitis—people who are not ill themselves but who may pass hepatitis on to others, according to the American Liver Foundation.

There are several kinds of hepatitis. The most common is hepatitis "B".

About 200,000 Americans are infected with this disease each year. While most people fight off the infection themselves, 5 to 10 percent develop serious liver disease.

About 5,000 Americans per year die of causes related to Hepatitis B. The disease is more infectious than AIDS and is transmitted through infected blood and other body fluids.

A simple blood test can diagnose Hepatitis B. Many infected people don't know they have hepatitis, although some people have symptoms that mimic the flu, including:

- loss of appetite, nausea or vomiting;
- fever;
- weakness or fatigue lasting weeks or months;
- abdominal pain;
- dark urine;
- yellowing skin and eyes.

Currently, there is only one approved medicine to treat Hepatitis B. It's an "interferon," a medicine that interferes with the ability of a virus to reproduce. Several other promising medicines are in development.

Fortunately, there's a safe and effective vaccine that protects against this virus. Three injections are required--the second one a month after the first and the third six months later.

Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for all newborns, infants and teenagers. The vaccine provides immunity for most people for at least five years.

Hepatitis can be avoided. You should always practice safe sex and never share objects such as needles, razors, toothbrushes, nail files and clippers.

When you get a manicure, tattoo, or body piercing, make sure sterile instruments are used. People who are exposed to blood in their work should be vaccinated.

Larry Lucas is Associate Vice President of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

## Cultural identity linked to low stress

A Florida A&M University psychology professor, conducting research on how stress affects African Americans, says students with the strongest cultural identity may live healthier lives, writes the *Daytona Times*. Dr. John W. Chambers and his team randomly chose about 100 A&M students from the school's freshman health classes to wear blood pressure monitors.

The monitoring devices are part of a five-year study begun in 1991 and paid for with a \$448,000 grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

"Individuals grounded in their culture are going to have a much stronger positive view of themselves," said Dr. Chambers. "Those with the highest level of Black consciousness have the most positive stress response."

Meadows advised looking at what we can do to eat for better health.

## Fruits and veggies better than pills

Can supplemental vitamins, fiber, and natural fruit and vegetable compounds, called "phytochemicals", in pill form work as well as foods to fight off cancer?

At a recent symposium presented by the American Institute for Cancer Research, leading diet and cancer researchers said supplements are not a substitute for eating plenty of plant-based foods.

When our bodies absorb phytochemicals, vitamins, and fiber from plant-based foods, they work in different ways to protect our health, by shielding cell membranes from damage to affecting rates of the cell division that is key to the cancer process.

According to Dr. Gary G. Meadows, Professor of Pharmacogenosy, Washington State University, "Researchers still have not discovered answers to questions about dosage and combined effects of these plant food elements. Studies that find benefits from food substances use

amounts that are far greater than in normal diets, and the toxic effects of large amounts of some vitamins and phytochemicals, and combinations of them, are still not known."

That's one reason why taking large doses of vitamin and phytochemical supplement pills is not advisable, the researchers pointed out.

"Many people believe that if a little is good, more must be better," Meadows commented. "In fact, overdoing any one thing often has negative effects. When people rely too much on supplement pills, they tend to forget about eating a balanced diet."

Other uncertainties, Meadows said, are the lack of standardization in the manufacture and labeling of complex phytochemical supplements, and not knowing how early in life or how long consumers have to take them to get beneficial effects.

For example, people may take supplement pills that claim to isolate the phytochemicals such as beta-car-

otene or sulphur compounds found in broccoli, garlic and other vegetables.

However, in reality there may be so much processing in making supplements that the chemical composition of the compounds may be altered and ultimately yield few health benefits for the consumer, noted Dr. John D. Potter, head of the Cancer Prevention Research Program at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and professor of epidemiology at the University of Washington.

As for the familiar refrain of "no

time to cook," the researchers advised Americans to put health before convenience by making the time to prepare and cook more healthy foods like vegetables, even if it means giving up some TV-watching time.

"We're a pill-taking society," Meadows pointed out. "Instead of changing our eating habits, we'd like to eat potato chips and take a pill to counteract the negative effects. But that's not very realistic."

Meadows advised looking at what we can do to eat for better health.

## Make Self Care A Priority

Making a personal commitment to take time out for you may mean reshuffling priorities.

With our unique roles as mother, wife, sisters, career women - and sometimes all of the above - our schedule is already full.

Cherish your body for the great gift that it is, and give it the best of care.

It is recommended that women 40 and older get annual health exams. Early detection saves lives.

If you are 40 or older you may qualify for a free Women's Health Check, which includes a pap test and mammogram.

Sign Up for the Race For The Cure September 8th, 1996

For more information call 795-3908



Multnomah County Breast and Cervical Cancer Partnership BCCP



Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation



MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

Keep this in mind when you're working outdoors, and avoid electrical accidents altogether by following these important safety tips:

- ❖ Before working on your home or property, locate all lines on nearby utility poles and structures.
- ❖ Treat every line you see as an energized power line.
- ❖ Stay at least 10 feet away from these lines at all times.

Exercise caution and use common sense around your home or property. When it comes to working outdoors near power lines, safety is no accident.

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