

Health & Science

Walk for Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives

Join the fun on Saturday, May 10, 1997 (the day before Mother's Day) at Pioneer Courthouse square in downtown Portland for Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Willamette's first Celebration Walk for Health Choices, Health Lives. More than 1,500 participants are expected to walk in support of children who are loved and wanted!

The Celebration Walk is a chance to show support for Planned Parenthood's efforts to help people make healthy choices, build health lives, and create healthy families. And the Celebration Walk is a chance to party with music by the Balafon Marimba Ensemble, healthy breakfast foods, chances to win prizes, a Joy Jump for the kids, a children's art booth (make that last minute Mother's Day card!), massage booths, and educational and information booths.

Entry forms and pledge sheets are available at all Planned Parenthood sites and many health clubs and sportswear outlets. Entry fees are \$15 for adults (\$18 day of event) and \$7 for children 12 and under.

Registration includes a t-shirt. Day-of-event registration begins at 7:30 am. Walks begin at 8:45 am. To register or for more information about the Celebration Walk, call 775-4931, fax 788-7285.

Supersizing is Oversizing

"Supersizing" your fast-food order may be a value, but it may not be what you bargained for in terms of your health.

"People are unaware of normal food portions," said Dr. John Foreyt, a professor of medicine and director of the Behavioral Medicine Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "Increasingly, larger-than-normal amounts of food are perceived as normal."

Buying an order of large fries and a 32-ounce cola instead of an order of small fries and a 12-ounce soft drink may cost only a few cents more, but it can double the calories.

Foreyt says despite the added fat, the inexpensive, larger fast-food "combo" is the choice of many busy families.

"Even children are used to ordering larger servings," he said.

The key is knowing how to make sensible food choices.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which developed the Food Guide Pyramid, a daily diet consisting of no more than 30 percent of calories from fat includes the following amounts of food:

Bread, cereal, rice and pasta: 6-11 servings. One serving equals 1 slice of bread, tortilla or pancake, a half-cup of cereal, rice or pasta, 2 medium cookies, a half of a bagel, or a hamburger bun.

Vegetables: 3-5 servings. One serving equals a half-cup of chopped raw or cooked vegetables, scalloped potatoes or potato salad, 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables, or 10 french fries.

Fruit: 2 to 4 servings. One serving equals 1 piece of fruit or melon wedge, a fourth-cup dried fruit, a half-cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit, or three-fourths cup of fruit juice.

Milk, Yogurt and Cheese: 2 to 3 servings. One serving equals 1 cup of milk or yogurt (plain or frozen), one and a half cups of ice cream or ice milk, 2 cups of cottage cheese, one and a half ounces of natural cheese, or two ounces of processed cheese.

Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts: 2 to 3 servings. One serving equals about 3 ounces of cooked lean beef, pork, lamb, veal, poultry or fish—roughly the size of a deck of playing cards, a half-cup of cooked beans, 1 egg, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.

Fats, oils and sweets: Use sparingly.

Ordering large portions of food at inexpensive prices can be tempting, Foreyt says, so know your order ahead of time.

"Don't be caught in the drive-thru line wondering what you want," Foreyt said. "You are in control of your diet, not a restaurant."

Preventing indigestion and heartburn

For people who suffer from indigestion and heartburn, a few simple changes in lifestyle and diet can often solve the problems.

Dr. Atilla Ertan, a gastroenterologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, recommends minimizing consumption of tobacco, alcohol, coffee and cola, including decaffeinated brands, and avoiding foods that have upset your stomach in the past.

If heartburn is a recurring problem, try elevating the head of your bed to minimize the reflux of stomach acid into the esophagus. Also, avoid tight-fitting clothes, lose weight and do not eat during the three hours before bedtime.

High blood pressure awareness promoted

In recognition of National High Blood Pressure Month (May 1997), the Office of Minority Health Resource Center (OMH-RC) is making a special effort to educate minority communities about high blood pressure. The Center is distributing free copies of a new information packet that contains tips for preventing high blood pressure.

One out of four American adults has high blood pressure or hypertension. African Americans are twice as likely than Whites to develop it, and the condition tends to develop earlier in African Americans and be more severe. It is the number one preventable cause of more than 65,000 excess deaths among African Americans each year.

"We don't know for sure why high blood pressure affects African Americans at higher rates than Whites, but it appears to be a mix of genetic and environmental factors," according to Ralph Watson, MD, a member of the OMH Resource Persons Network. "One of the most significant factors that puts African Americans at risk is a diet that is high in salt," he said. Dr. Watson

has 18 years of experience treating African Americans with high blood pressure and serves as director of the Hypertension Clinic at Michigan State University.

"It is crucial that we put high blood pressure information into the hands of minorities because the condition is a silent killer," said Jose T. Carneiro, EdD, director of OMH-RC. "High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, and many people go for years without knowing they have it." Left untreated, the condition can lead to serious health problems, including heart disease, kidney failure, stroke, and vision problems.

So what exactly is blood pressure? Each time your heart beats, it pushes blood into vessels that carry blood away from the heart to other parts of the body. Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of those vessels. It is measured in two numbers. A normal blood pressure reading is 130/85 or lower, and any reading of 140/90 or higher is called high blood pressure. The first number measures the pressure during a

heartbeat, and the second number measures the pressure between heartbeats. Having high blood pressure means that your blood vessels are narrow, making it harder for the blood to flow and causing the pressure to increase.

"Preventing high blood pressure can save lives," Dr. Carneiro said. "That's why we want people to know the factors that put them at risk." High blood pressure tends to run in families, and though the chance of developing it increases with age, it can occur in children as well as adults. The good news is that regular check-ups and lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, exercising, and limiting intake of salt and alcohol, can play a big role in preventing and controlling high blood pressure.

National High Blood Pressure Month is sponsored by the National High Blood Pressure Education Program's Coordinating Committee, and is administered by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

The High Blood Pressure Information Packets are available now. To request your free copy, call 1-800-444-6472 and ask to speak with an information specialist.

300,000 Oregonians Breathe Easier

7th Annual "Reach the Beach" Clean Air Bicycle Challenge

The American Lung Association of Oregon is holding its 7th Annual "Reach the Beach" Clean Air Bicycle Challenge on Saturday, May 17, 1997. Participants from the beginner to the seasoned cyclist are invited to join an expected 2,000 Northwesterners on one of four different bicycle routes through breathtaking scenery.

Reach the Beach, sponsored by Portland General Electric, promises to be a day of great recreation and fun for families, neighbors, corporate teams, and friends old and new. Proceeds go toward Lung Association programs for clean air, research, and services benefiting more than 300,000 Oregonians with lung diseases.

Riders can choose a route -- starting from Portland, Salem, Amity, or

Grand Ronde -- to best fit their ability.

Courses wind through lush Willamette Valley farms and vineyards and the majestic coast range forest. The Grand Ronde route covers terrain especially for mountain bikers. Rest stops with food and water and medical and bike mechanic services support participants along the routes.

All the routes end in Pacific City, where beautiful Cape Kiwanda and Haystack Rock are the backdrop to a finish festival with food and entertainment.

But biking isn't the only way to join the fun. Volunteers are welcome to help make the event a great success again this year. For more information, call the Lung Association at (503)246-1997 or 1-800-LUNG-USA in Oregon.

Betting on a Vegas Heart-stopper

High rollers at Las Vegas casinos now have better odds at winning what might be the biggest jackpot of all -- heart attack survival.

"At the Stardust, we're going to have four defibrillator units," explained Rob Stillwell, spokesman for the Boyd Gaming Corporation, which operates the Stardust, along with six other Las Vegas casinos. "It's a minimal cost when you consider the fact that you're going to be able to save lives."

Time is a crucial factor in cardiac arrest survival. Experts from Las Vegas' Clark County Fire Department (CCFD) say that "after four minutes have elapsed (without medical assistance), the probability of surviving a cardiac arrest drops by approximately 10% per minute." And they say, "the survival rate could be improved to well over 50% if automatic external defibrillators were available for immediate use."

Stillwell explained that EMS crews have always had a tough time getting to those who've suffered heart attacks while in casinos. "The paramedics

are super at getting to the casinos," he said. "But once they get there, because of the sheer volume of people that we have in our casinos, it's very difficult to reach the affected person in a timely manner."

In fact, the CCFD studied the average time elapsing between the emergency 911 call and the "first shock" of the defibrillator to the afflicted casino-patron's chest. For the Stardust, that time averaged well over 14 minutes. In fact, none of the 20 casinos in the CCFD study were able to get defibrillators to those who needed them in under 9 minutes.

The American Heart Association (AHA) is backing the casino's move. "With new defibrillator technology and trained people, we can save many more lives," said Dr. Myron Weisfeldt,

chair of the AHA's national AED (defibrillator) Task Force.

Right now, the odds of being dealt a winning hand in beating heart attack on the casino floor are pretty low. The CCFD study found that only 159 of 736 individuals survived cardiac arrest suffered at Vegas casinos between 1993-1996.

The case for medical marijuana

The success of two voter referendums supporting medical use of marijuana is one of the most interesting outcomes of the November election. California's Proposition 215 allows patients under a doctor's care to treat a variety of ailments with marijuana. Arizona's Proposition 200 goes a step further, allowing doctors to prescribe any drug they deem appropriate, and mandating treatment, not incarceration, for those arrested for possession of an illegal drug. These votes signal that it's time to stop arguing about whether medical marijuana works—that question has already been answered—and start talking about how to best make marijuana available to patients who could benefit from it. Opponents of the two propositions denied the reality of these patients, thousands of who currently smoke marijuana to alleviate the pain and suffering caused by cancer, AIDS, glaucoma, arthritis, and multiple sclerosis. Many of these patients never smoked marijuana before they got sick, and many don't care for the drug's psychoactive effects. They smoke not to get high, but to get relief they can't get any other way.

Bicycle helmets save lives and prevent injuries

The best advice for bikers, said Dr. Tom Jaksic, a pediatric surgeon at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, is to always wear a helmet when biking.

Although helmet compliance is particularly low among teenagers, statistics continue to show a dramatic link between helmet use and reduced risk for injury and death.

"In most bicycle accidents," Jaksic said, "the head or neck is the most common area for serious injury."

He recommends helmets that are light, snug-fitting and bright in color for better visibility.

Diaper Rash: a thing of the past

Whether you use cloth or disposable diapers, the bottom line is keeping the baby's skin dry. Approximately 30 percent of visits to pediatricians are related to diaper rash.

Diaper rash is caused by substances in feces and urine, by friction from diapers, by prolonged wetting and by soap, said Dr. Moise L. Levy, a dermatologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Frequent diaper changing is the best prevention, Levy said.

Help For Impotent Men

For some men suffering from impotence, a new procedure called MUSE offers hope of a return to normal sexual function.

"One group is those men who now can achieve erections only by injecting themselves at the base of their penises with medicine that relaxes the penile tissue and allows blood to enter more easily."

MUSE, medicated urethral system for erection, may be especially helpful for two specific groups of impotent men, said Dr. Larry I. Lipshultz, a urologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

One group is those men who now can achieve erections only by injecting themselves at the base of their penises with medicine that relaxes the penile tissue and allows blood to enter more easily. The other group is impotent men who have avoided treatment because they fear the invasiveness of self-injections.

With MUSE, a pellet containing the drug alprostadil is inserted into the urethra. Once inside, the medicated pellet caused blood to flow into the penis, facilitating erection and sexual intercourse.

COMMUNITY

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Call 503-288-0033

DIVERSITY

Women of PURPOSE



Join us for an evening of special dessert buffet, special music & a special message from Dr. O. Virginia Phillips the evening of April 3, 1997 at the Lloyd Center Red Lion 7:00PM - 9:00PM. \$8.50 at the door. If you have any questions, please call Zaria at 331-0330.

Women of Purpose is a non-denominational Christian group.

Mature African-Americans With High Blood Pressure



Be part of a nationwide research program sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health that will help identify the best medicine for preventing heart attacks and strokes in African-Americans aged 55 and above. As a participant, you will receive medicine that is currently used to treat high blood pressure.

To be considered for participation, you should:

- Be at least 55 years old
- Have high blood pressure
- Have one other risk factor for having a heart attack or stroke, such as diabetes, heart disease or be a current cigarette smoker

Qualifying participants receive FREE high blood pressure medicine for up to 5 years.

For more information, please call toll free, 8am - 5pm

1-888-HEART-OK
1-888-432-7865

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

This red alert message is for you!

The Community Solutions Project is trying to identify ways to help African American, Native American and Hispanic teenagers with ongoing health conditions get through school, take care of their health, and get jobs.

We are talking about teenagers with health conditions like diabetes, heart problems, brain injury, cerebral palsy, sickle cell, epilepsy, cancer, spina bifida, severe asthma, HIV/AIDS, or any other health problem that gets in the way of everyday life.

If this fits you, please give us a call. We would like to invite you or your child to participate in a discussion group to tell us about your experiences.

If you prefer to talk with someone individually rather than in a group, we'd be happy to set it up. Each family will receive \$15.00 and child care can be provided.

Please consider getting involved!

For more information, contact: Christine Williams, Norma Trimble or Sarah Geenen at 494-4634.

If you prefer to speak Spanish, please call Leslie Garcia or Alphonso Lopez-Vasquez at 494-7574.