

Take Action. Get Tested!

\$20 value

"Where to go, so you know"

Multnomah County Health Department's HIV Community Test Site offers **confidential** HIV testing with or without your name at these locations:

Downtown Community Test Site
Call 503.988.3775 for an appt.
Mon | Thurs | Fri
426 SW Stark St., 6th Floor,
Portland, 97204

Northeast Health Center
Just walk in
Tuesdays | 5:30 - 7:15 pm
5329 NE MLK Jr. Blvd, 2nd Floor,
Portland, 97211

"Free with this coupon"



Se habla español: other interpretation by appointment.

HEALTH MATTERS

For Your Health



BY LARRY LUCAS

Making Healthy Lifestyle Choices

February is a time each year when heart-shaped chocolate, candies and cards take center stage. But there's another heart of the non-confectionary variety we should also take time to think about this month – the one in our bodies.

Like an engine to a car, the human heart is responsible for keeping other organs working and our bodies moving. We know how important it is to conduct regular maintenance on an engine to prevent issues with the entire car. Heart health is no different. Yet cardiovascular diseases, which include heart attack and stroke, are the leading causes of death in the United States. In fact, more than 81 million Americans live with various forms of cardiovascular diseases, which led to one quarter of all deaths in the U.S. last year.

These numbers are especially startling for the African-American community where more than 40 percent of all adults suffer from high blood pressure, one of the most critical – yet preventable – indicators of cardiovascular health. Preventing high blood pressure could mean the difference between life or death: African Americans today are 1.5 times more likely to suffer a heart disease-related death than other Americans and are nearly twice as likely to die because of a fatal stroke. What's more: Nearly half of us are unaware we're living with high-blood pressure.

Alarmed by these figures? You should be! Let them serve as a wake-up call about the importance of maintaining your heart's health. Many common causes of cardiovascular diseases can be eliminated by reducing their major risk factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, lack of exercise and poor nutrition. When it comes to heart health, lifestyle choices, like what you eat and how much you exercise, play a critical role in preventing potentially devastating diseases.

As someone who has lived with high blood pressure for more than 20 years, I know a thing or two about lifestyle choices. I keep my heart healthy by taking the stairs instead of the elevator, visiting my doctor for regular cardiovas-

cular check-ups and properly taking my prescribed medicines. It's these small steps that mean the most, and making the right choices can help curb the risk of heart disease, enabling you to live a longer, healthier life.

It's also important to remember that many lifestyle choices that lead to heart diseases later in life, like diet and tobacco use, begin when we're young. It takes years, and in some cases decades, for them to catch up with us – which is why young people should know their future heart health is shaped by the choices they make today.

Making healthy choices can help prevent heart disease, but there are other risk factors that you can't control – like age and family history. In addition to lifestyle changes, you and your doctor may decide that prescription medicines are the best way to help keep your heart healthy.

Fortunately there are nearly 300 medicines in development for heart disease and stroke by America's biopharmaceutical research and manufacturing companies – all of which are either being tested in clinical trials or awaiting approval by the Food & Drug Administration.

Developing these medicines means very little if patients in need can't access them. Luckily, there are programs available to help patients find and pay for their prescriptions. Since 2005, America's biopharmaceutical researchers and manufacturers have supported the Partnership for Prescription Assistance (1-888-4PPA-NOW; pparx.org), which helps connect patients in need to 475 assistance programs that offer more than 2,500 medicines for free or nearly free.

In addition to thinking about your special someone this month, be sure to keep your own heart in mind by making an appointment to visit your physician to gauge your current heart health. Awareness is the first step in preventing heart diseases and ensuring there are many more Valentine's Days to come.

Larry Lucas is retired vice president for Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers (above center) and his skilled staff are ready to help those in need.

THE SPINA COLUMN™

An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession.

Part 5. WHIPLASH: It doesn't take a serious accident to cause serious damage.

Q: How bad an accident does it take to actually cause whiplash?

A: While most people think of whiplash only as the result of a rear end collision, it can occur as a result of a fall or other sudden jolt. In car collisions, speeds as low as 5 MPH (a brisk walk) have caused whiplash. What's more, major studies show there is virtually no correlation between damage to the car and its occupants.

Q: How can I tell if whiplash has happened to me?

A: Whiplash often exhibits symptoms such as a sore

neck, arm or shoulder, nausea, blurred vision and headaches. If not treated immediately, these problems can lead to other more severe ones. To complicate matters, it sometimes takes years before whiplash symptoms occur.

Q: What should I do if I've had a fall or a car accident?

A: Don't take any chances. Schedule a complete chiropractic exam immediately. Our office specializes not only in relieving whiplash symptoms, but also in making sure those problems don't become bigger ones down the road. For diagnosis of possible whiplash, or answers to any questions you might have about your health, please call us at the number listed right below.

Flowers' Chiropractic Office

2124 N.E. Hancock Street, Portland Oregon 97212

Phone: (503) 287-5504