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Regarding WOMEN

& HEALTHCARE

Avoid Chemical Disasters Lurking in Your Home



Keep children and pets safe by installing drawer locks, closing doors and storing hazardous substances on high shelves.

Prevent Home Chemical Disasters

- ▶ Mix unused or expired drugs with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter, before placing in trash.
- ▶ Do not purchase hazardous materials packaged in a way that would appeal to a child.
- ▶ Buy the least hazardous product for the job.
- ▶ Never store hazardous products in food or beverage containers.
- ▶ Store products that warn of vapors and fumes in a well-ventilated area.
- ▶ Keep containers dry to prevent corrosion.
- ▶ Keep flammable products away from heat and sparks.
- ▶ Avoid aerosol products, which can have toxic propellants and produce a fine mist that is easily inhaled. Pressurized cans can explode when crushed, punctured or burned.
- ▶ Use “Mr. Yuck” stickers on dangerous products.
- ▶ Know the poison control number—**800-222-1222**.

While we think “chemical disasters” are from factory accidents or hazardous material spills, most chemical disasters occur in the home.

“Over 89 percent of poison exposures occur in the home,” reports Dr. Jane E. Pearson, OSF Saint Anthony EMS medical director and director of disaster preparedness and management. “Awareness and prevention are key.”

Medications, if combined with alcohol or other drugs or if taken in the wrong amounts, can be toxic.

In particular, teen abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications is rampant. “Keep track of your medicines,” advises Dr. Pearson. “If you notice drugs are missing, take action immediately.”

For children younger than six, cosmetic and personal care products, cleaning substances, medications and plants are often the sources of poison exposure. Fifty-three percent of poison exposures and 2 percent of fatalities occur in this age group.

Over 500,000 products on the mar-

ket pose physical or health hazards, and each year, more than 1,000 new synthetic chemicals are introduced. Labels indicate that some products can ignite, are corrosive or can be toxic at certain levels, particularly if used in a small, poorly ventilated area. Read the labels for product contents, cautions, directions and disposal.

Whether you swallow a hazardous product, inhale fumes or absorb it through your skin or eyes, many products can endanger your health. In particular, be cautious in using automotive products, household cleaners, paints and pesticides.

Try natural cleaners with baking soda, vinegar, salt and lemon juice when possible.

“Also be aware of look-alike products,” Dr. Pearson adds. “Some cleaning products, lamp oils and other products are packaged like fruit drinks.” ♦

Enter to win a \$200 CherryVale Mall gift certificate. See the coupon on page 3.

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Give Your Body a Pre-Baby Boost



START AT THE TABLE

Eat a healthy, balanced diet that includes lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and dairy products. Those foods have nutrients to keep your reproductive system healthy.

Get 400 micrograms of folate daily from a folic acid supplement or multivitamin or from foods such as fortified breakfast cereal. Folate can reduce the risk for birth defects.

Calcium and zinc, a mineral that affects ovulation, are key. Also important: vitamins A and C. Getting them from food is best, but supplements can help you round out your diet.

STRIVE FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Women who are underweight or perform intense exercises might not ovulate regularly and might have problems getting pregnant. Overweight women might have difficulty conceiving due to hormones. Moderate exercise might increase fertility, but begin before you get pregnant.



CLEAN UP

Smoking, drugs and alcohol all decrease fertility. Caffeine can also interfere with getting pregnant. “Limit your intake of caffeinated beverages to no more than one or two cups, at most,” adds Dr. Zug. “Avoid alcohol, which can make it more difficult for some women to get pregnant.” When possible, steer clear of harmful substances such as fertilizers, pesticides and secondhand smoke. ❖

If you're trying to conceive, good health is more important than ever. Women need to focus on their health before they become pregnant—for the first time or the next time.

Dr. Diane Zug, family practice physician with OSF Medical Group—Springcreek, recommends that you check in with your doctor at least three months before conception to review your health history, medications and lifestyle.

In addition, consider these steps if you have problems conceiving:

fact

The more stressed you are, the less likely you'll conceive. Relaxation practices such as meditation, deep breathing or yoga can reduce stress hormones. Some studies suggest that acupuncture may also be helpful in reducing stress, increasing reproductive hormones or stimulating blood flow to the uterus.



Eat Smart for School Smarts

Want your kids to shine at school? Stock up on fruits and vegetables and skip the junk food. In a recent study of more than 4,500 Canadian fifth-graders, researchers found a link

between a child's diet and academic performance. Kids who ate more fruits and vegetables and less fat were less likely to fail standardized reading and writing tests. The best recipe for school success? A diet made up of a variety of healthy foods, with all the recommended servings from each food group.

Journal of School Health, vol. 78, no. 4

THE OSF CENTER FOR LIFE HAS PROGRAMS FOR YOUR GROWING FAMILY!

In addition to a four-session prenatal program, OSF offers a one-day Baby Express class, a prenatal refresher segment, infant and toddler CPR, breastfeeding classes, and a sibling class and tour.

For new mothers and babies discharged from OSF Saint Anthony, the Post-Partum Clinic provides free sessions with an OB nurse so that any medical problems can be identified and questions answered.

Call 815-227-2695 for dates, fees and registration.

Gastric Banding: Another Tool in the Obesity Battle

Many people wage a courageous battle to lose weight and keep it off. Yet despite repeated attempts and various diets, success remains elusive.

Now there is another weapon to help fight obesity. The Lap-Band® system is a minimally invasive procedure that is now offered in the Rockford area by OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center.

The gastric adjustable banding surgery is not for those who want to lose 10 or 15 pounds. It is intended for those who:

- ▼ Are severely obese
- ▼ Have serious weight-related health problems
- ▼ Have not had success with diet and exercise plans

“Obesity is truly an epidemic, and its effects on health are dramatic,” states Dr. Karin Blumofe, independent surgeon affiliated with OSF. “High blood pressure, diabetes, sleep apnea, heartburn, asthma and certain types of cancer are all associated with obesity.”

ADVANTAGES OF THE BANDING SYSTEM

With gastric banding, the stomach size is reduced so food intake is decreased. The feeling of fullness lasts longer so snacks are avoided. Weight loss tends to be gradual, which can reduce risks associated with rapid weight loss.

Gastric banding is not as invasive as gastric bypass and has a lower complication rate. Many patients can go home from the hospital the same day and may be able to return to work in a week. The banding is adjustable and can be tailored to an individual’s needs.

“Once patients lose weight, their joint pain

eases,” reports Dr. Blumofe. “Some are able to get off medications to control blood pressure or type 2 diabetes.

“The social and psychological benefits are even more impressive,” she adds. “These patients are not looking to be models: they just want to ride a roller coaster with their kids, buy clothes, play on the floor with a grandchild or walk upstairs without losing their breath. These are simple things many of us take for granted.”

ESSENTIAL LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Before surgery, patients must complete six months of a dietitian- or physician-supervised diet and undergo evaluations by a psychologist, dietitian and other specialists.

“It’s quite a process before approval is given,” explains Dr. Blumofe. “And for about three weeks after the surgery, patients follow a liquid diet. Patients must make a firm commitment to changes in their diets and to exercise.”

Dr. Blumofe stresses that the decision to undergo gastric banding is not a sign of failure. Most patients have tried everything—diets, medication, exercise—with limited or no success.

“Gastric banding is not an easy fix or magic bullet,” she adds. “But it is a great tool and treatment that shows success for many people.” ❖

A free seminar about the procedure will be offered at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, June 2, at Rockford Cardiology, 444 Roxbury Road. For reservations and information, call **815-227-2274**.



FINDING

Obesity Puts Women at Greater Risk for Silent Killer

Ovarian cancer is sometimes called the silent killer. That’s because its symptoms—bloating, fatigue, back pain and upset stomach—aren’t that unusual. Many women fail to mention these symptoms to their doctor. And by the time ovarian cancer is diagnosed, the disease is usually very advanced. But we now know that some women are more at risk for ovarian cancer. And these women, together with their doctors, can be on the alert for the disease. For example, researchers found that obesity may be a major risk factor for certain types of ovarian cancer. What’s more, ovarian cancer usually strikes women ages 40 and older. But new findings show that obesity may put younger women at greater risk for some ovarian cancers. If you’re overweight, talk with your doctor about your risk.

International Journal of Cancer,
vol. 123, no. 2

REGISTER FOR OUR DRAWING FOR A \$200 CHERRYVALE MALL GIFT CERTIFICATE

OSF employees and their family members in the same household are NOT eligible for the drawing.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Send to Marketing & Communications, OSF Saint Anthony Center for Health, 5510 East State St., Rockford IL 61108-2381.

Entries must be postmarked by Saturday, July 18, 2009, to be entered into the drawing. The drawing will be held between July 27 and July 31, 2009.

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FINDING

Add Potassium, Help Avoid High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure can be deadly. It's the leading cause of heart disease and stroke. Fortunately, adding a little potassium to your diet can help control and even prevent high blood pressure. Most of us get only about half of the daily recommended amount of potassium (4.7 grams a day). You can boost your potassium—and help control your blood pressure—by snacking on bananas, prunes, sunflower seeds, plain peanuts and avocados. Talk with your doctor before boosting your potassium intake with a daily supplement.

The Journal of Clinical Hypertension, vol. 10, no. 7, supplement

Hip Resurfacing: Alternative Surgery for Severe Pain

Are You Right for Resurfacing?

Younger, healthy-weight women with sturdy hip bones can be good candidates for the surgery. Those older than 65 and women who might become pregnant are probably not good candidates. Talk with your doctor about whether hip resurfacing is an option for you or call Rockford Orthopedic Associates, Ltd., at **815-398-9491** for more information.

If you suffer from hip joint damage caused by osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, injury or another condition, the severe pain can make daily activities difficult. Initial treatment often includes exercise and medication. But if those steps don't work, you might want to consider surgery. In recent years, many advances have been made in hip surgery, including a newer technique called hip resurfacing.

WHAT IS HIP RESURFACING?

Hip resurfacing is a type of hip replacement surgery. Unlike a traditional hip replacement in which the head of the leg bone is completely replaced with an implant, hip resurfacing removes less bone. The socket of the hip joint is replaced with a metal implant. Then a metal cap is placed over the head of the leg bone that goes in the socket, much like a dentist caps a tooth.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

Although hip resurfacing has been approved by the FDA for only the last few years, many doctors think the

metal-on-metal hip implant will wear longer than traditional hip replacements, making it a better option for younger, more active people. In addition, resurfaced hips are less likely to become dislocated.

One patient recalled her eager anticipation of FDA approval of the hip resurfacing procedure. When it became available in the U.S., she sought out Mark Barba, MD, a joint replacement surgeon at Rockford Orthopedic Associates, who had completed training in the procedure.

"Living with pain had placed such limitations on everyday life," she explains. "Hip resurfacing allowed me to become an active participant in my life again rather than sitting on the sidelines unable to do so many things."

"I have performed about 80 hip resurfacing procedures for patients since 2006, and the results still continue to amaze me," adds Dr. Barba. "I have consistently witnessed dramatic life changes for patients after the surgery. Without exception, patients are overjoyed with the active lifestyle that has been returned to their lives." ❖