

ACCENT

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TO YOUR HEALTH

St. Francis offers classes in February

St. Francis Hospital Indianapolis, 8111 S. Emerson Ave. is sponsoring the following events:

- Oncologist nurse practitioner Janice Leak will present "Tired of Thinking or Too Tired to Think: Managing Fatigue and Chemo Brain," at a free seminar for cancer patients and their families from noon to 2 p.m. Feb. 16. The session includes lunch for all registered participants at St. Francis Hospital Indianapolis.

The program is designed for both the newly diagnosed and in-treatment cancer patients. Caregivers also are welcome.

Registration preferred by Feb. 14 at 257-1505.

- A Freedom from Smoking class will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays for seven weeks beginning Feb. 13 at St. Francis Community Relations, 3145 E. Thompson Road, Indianapolis.

Cost is \$50 and may be reimbursed by insurance.

Information and reservations: 782-7999

- St. Francis Heart Center offers a free program, "Heart Matters: What every woman should know about heart disease" at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 20 at the Inn at St. Francis in Indianapolis.

Topics include: factors that put women at risk for heart disease, family health history, symptoms and how they differ from men's, surgical procedures, blood pressure, cholesterol readings, weight, diet and activity.

Dark chocolate will be served along with giveaways. Wear red for another gift.

Registration recommended at 782-4422.

Space is limited.

Health-care foundation for children offers grants

The UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation offers support to meet the needs of children nationwide with assistance grants for medical services not fully covered by health insurance.

Parents and caretakers will be eligible to apply for grants of up to \$5,000 for health-care services that will help improve their children's health and quality of life.

Examples of the types of medical services covered by grants include: speech therapy; physical therapy and psychotherapy sessions; medical equipment such as wheelchairs, braces, hearing aids and eyeglasses; and orthodontia and dental treatments.

To be eligible for foundation grants, children must be 16 or younger. Families must meet economic guidelines, reside in the United States and be covered by a commercial health insurance plan.

The UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation is a public charity that operates independently from United Healthcare with its own board of directors. The foundation also looks for individual and corporate donations to help provide assistance.

Donors can designate funds to be used in the region where they reside; otherwise unspecified donations are divided equally among the regions.

To apply: UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation, MN012-S286, P.O. Box 41, Minneapolis, MN 55440-0041, or call (800) 328-5979 Ext. 24459, or online at uhccf.org.

Buy flowers to support cancer research

Johnson County residents can support cancer prevention, detection and patient-service programs by buying a bunch of flowers during the Daffodil Days fund-raiser.

For a donation of \$10 or \$15, the society will provide individuals and area businesses a bouquet of 10 fresh-cut daffodils or daffodils and a glass vase.

The society also will offer a special gift of daffodils delivered anonymously to local cancer patients, treatment centers and nursing homes in Central Indiana.

The Gift of Hope costs \$25. Donations fund transportation to outpatient appointments, school health programs and 24-hour access to cancer information on cancer.org and (800) ACS-2345.

Flowers will be delivered March 13 to 16.

The minimum order for delivery is \$50.

Information: 347-6670



Celebrity models acknowledge audience applause on the runway during the Red Dress Heart Truth fashion show during fashion week in New York on Friday.

AP PHOTOS

Fashion with heart

Catwalk stroll promotes heart-health awareness

The Associated Press

First lady Laura Bush helped women's health advocates paint the town red last week, promoting heart health and attending a Fashion Week show awash in Big Apple hues.

Laura Bush, dressed in a crimson suit heralding the heart theme — or was it a historical nod to "Nancy Reagan Red"? — urged America's women to get out and walk to improve their cardiac health.

"Walking sure is a great stress reliever, provided you put down the (work) papers and the cell phone," the first lady said at the Bryant Park Hotel.

"I love to walk," she said — be it at Camp David, her family's Texas ranch or on a treadmill at the White House gym.

The heart health theme was discussed in an informal, private dialogue that included about 12 prominent women cardiologists and other advocates.

It was suggested that women take a daily walk with a friend, spouse or dog.

"Barney can't even walk. He's obese, I think," Bush quipped about the First Canine.

The participants, who included Dr. Elizabeth Nabel, director of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, stressed that women's heart-attack symptoms can be different from men's and said women should be proactive — seeing their doctors, taking stress tests, exercising and watching their diets.

Participant Joyce Cullen, 54, of Kansas City, Mo., said the first lady's campaign saved her life.

In 2003, Bush visited Kansas City and discussed women's heart attack symptoms, including exhaustion and neck pain. Cullen read about Bush's advice and remembered it two days later when she experienced those symptoms. She ended up having bypass surgery, performed by a doctor who had attended Bush's speech.

Cullen later visited the White House at Bush's invitation and has become a heart-health advocate.

Afterward, Bush and women from the discussion went across the street to the fashion tents at Bryant Park to view the upbeat "Red Dress Collection of 2007" show, which included red-hot designs by Betsey Johnson, Donna Karan, Ralph Lauren, Oscar De La Renta and Ellen Tracy, among others.

That first show on the catwalks at Bryant Park was the Heart Truth show, an annual event in which celebrities wear red dresses created for them by famous designers.

Heart Truth is part of the Red Dress project, a federal initiative spearheaded by Bush, to raise awareness about heart disease.

It's not a fashion show by traditional standards, but the standing ovation that tennis great Billie Jean King received might be a sign that fashion industry insiders are more willing to accept women who exceed the size 0s that have become the standard.



Racecar driver Danica Patrick, wearing a dress by designer Jovovich-Hawk, walks the runway during the Red Dress Heart Truth fashion show during Fashion Week in New York on Friday.

More teens turning to gastric bypass surgery

By DAVID CARUSO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK

As the popularity of stomach surgery has skyrocketed among obese adults, a growing number of doctors are asking, "Why not children, too?"

For decades, the number of kids trying weight-loss surgery has been tiny. The operations themselves were risky, with a death rate of about 1 in 50. Children rarely got that fat, and when they did, pediatricians hesitated to put the developing bodies under the knife.

Only 350 U.S. kids had such an operation in 2004, according to federal statistics.

But improvements in surgical technique and huge increases in the number of dangerously obese children have begun fueling a change of heart.

A group of four hospitals, led by Cincinnati Children's Hospital

Medical Center, are starting a large-scale study this spring examining how children respond to various types of weight-loss surgery, including the gastric bypass, in which a pouch is stapled off from the rest of the stomach and connected to the small intestine.

Three more hospitals have approval from the Food and Drug Administration to test how teens fare with a procedure called laparoscopic gastric banding, where an elastic collar installed around the stomach limits how much someone can eat.

The FDA has hesitated to approve the gastric band for children, but surgeons at New York University Medical Center reported in the Journal of Pediatric Surgery this month that the device holds promise.

The 53 boys and girls, age 13 to 17, who participated in NYU's study shed nearly half their excess weight over 18 months

while suffering relatively minor complications.

Crystal Kasprovicz, of St. James, N.Y., said she lost 100 pounds from her 250-pound frame after having the band installed at age 17.

"I'm a totally different person," she said.

Before the procedure, Kasprovicz said she took medication for a rapid heartbeat and was showing signs of developing diabetes.

Every effort she made to stop getting bigger failed. Dieting didn't work, she said. Her heart problems made it hard to exercise. Even walking up stairs was a challenge.

Now, she's off the heart drugs. Her blood-sugar levels are in check. She also feels better about herself.

"I'm very outgoing now," said Kasprovicz. "I hike a lot ... I go to the beach in the summer now. I'm not as self-conscious when I

go shopping for clothing."

Similar studies are under way at the University of Illinois Medical Center in Chicago and at the Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of New York-Presbyterian, which recently opened a weight-loss surgery center for teens. Doctors there expect to conduct about 50 operations this year.

Children are considered candidates for surgery only after they have spent six months trying to lose weight through conventional methods under hospital supervision. But so far, not a single one has slimmed down enough to take surgery off the table, said Dr. Jeffrey Zitsman, associate attending surgeon at Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital.

"That battle can only be won in a few instances," he said.

The studies have followed a huge surge in the popularity of obesity surgeries among adults. The American Society for

Bariatric Surgery estimates that more than 177,000 Americans had weight-loss surgery last year, up from 47,000 in 2001.

Not everyone is pleased that kids might be next.

"I don't think altering the human digestive tract is a solution to the problem of excess weight," said Joanne Ikeda, a nutritionist emerita at the University of California, Berkeley. "It's one of these quick-fixes that isn't a fix at all."

Doctors, she said, still know relatively little about the long-term effects of such operations on the young.

The federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality released a study in July that said four in 10 weight-loss surgery patients develop complications within six months. Among adults, mortality rates among gastric bypass patients remain at between 1 in 100 and 1 in 200 patients.