

WOMEN'S HEALTH *Talk*



GIVE THE GIFT ...OF LIFE

Traditionally a slow month for donations, January has been named National Blood Donor month by the American Association of Blood Banks, America's Blood Centers and the American Red Cross.

The holidays, busy travel schedules, inclement weather and illness take a toll on potential blood donors, making it a difficult time for blood centers to meet necessary quotas. During this annual blood drive, the blood banking community encourages healthy individuals to donate in January and once again sometime during the year.

"Every day blood is needed in hospitals and emergency treatment facilities for patients with cancer and other diseases ... and to save the lives of accident victims," says American Red Cross President and CEO Marsha Evans. "The single unit of blood that one person donates could help save the lives of up to three different people."

Visit: www.aabb.org
www.americasblood.org
www.redcross.org

LIFE-CHANGING LOCKS

Hair loss in women, children not uncommon

Baldness in men, while distressing to some, is not uncommon. You may be surprised to know that 30 million women in America experience some type of diffused hair loss. Even more startling are the two million children in this country who suffer from alopecia.

Alopecia (hair loss), although medically benign, can cause psychological trauma. In addition to cosmetic concerns, it evokes feelings of vulnerability, loss of self-esteem, loss of control, helplessness and changes in self-image.

Reasons for hair loss include:

Androgenetic alopecia, or female pattern hair loss, is the most common cause, occurring in one-third of all susceptible women. It is hereditary in nature, coming from either side of the family. Hair falls out gradually, causing thinning across the entire scalp.

Stress can trigger hair loss even in women who do not have an inherited disposition toward female pattern hair loss, or can actually speed the process in those who do. Causes include losing a loved one, strenuous sports training or severe illness.

Hormonal changes occurring during or after pregnancy, menopause or discontinuation of birth control pills can be the precursor to temporary, and sometimes permanent, loss of hair.

Trichotillomania is an emotional disorder which manifests as the urge to pull one's hair, resulting in noticeable hair loss. Sufferers are known to pull out eyebrows and eyelashes, in addition to hair from the scalp. Anxiety, stress and depression are catalysts for this disorder and it affects twice as many females as males.

Chemotherapy drugs and radiation treatments also induce hair loss. They poison cancer cells and in the process, hair follicles are poisoned. Hair falls out generally two to three weeks after treatments begin. It is reversible, however, and hair will return after treatments stop.

Alopecia totalis is total baldness of the scalp and alopecia universalis describes hair loss over the entire body. Alopecia areata, a loss of hair on the scalp occurring in one or more small patches, is a hereditary disorder and most often begins in childhood.



Krystal Garcia, WHB spokeswoman for hair loss, suffers from alopecia areata.

Krystal Garcia was twelve when she noticed a bald spot on the top of her head. She was diagnosed with alopecia areata, the beginning of an emotionally-charged journey. Withdrawing from social situations because of others' response to her condition, she was fortunate to have supportive parents who gave her the tools she needed to adjust successfully. As she grew, finding properly fitting and attractive cranial prostheses (wigs) gave her the poise and self-assurance to become Women's Health Boutique's

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In This Issue...

- Women and Hair Loss
- Breast Cancer-Now What?
- Cancer Sniffing Dogs

I HAVE BREAST CANCER – NOW WHAT?

More than 200,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year in the United States. Statistics often have little impact — until you become one.

When Tammy, a 42-year-old single mother, went in to have her first mammogram six years ago, she did not expect the news she received. “They told me on the phone,” she says. “I worked the rest of the day. When I left the office in the afternoon I started bawling and don’t remember driving home.”

John Donne, a 17th century poet observed that “No man is an island.” Others who have experienced similar circumstances can offer guidance and be of comfort. When cancer touches your life, it is time to reach out for help.

Y-ME is a national breast cancer organization whose mission is to ensure that no one faces the disease alone. Providing peer support and fellowship, services include:

- ◆ A 24-hour national breast cancer hotline (offers translation in 150 languages) provides trained peer counselors who are breast cancer survivors
- ◆ Men’s support group for those whose partners have breast cancer
- ◆ ShareRing Network, a free monthly teleconference featuring a breast cancer-related presentation by a healthcare professional, followed by a question and answer session; participants are divided into small groups for discussion, moderated by volunteers
- ◆ *Lifeline*, a quarterly newsletter providing the latest information on breast cancer issues, research and other concerns

◆ Educational programs for teens and for underserved communities with limited English proficiency

◆ Wig & Prosthesis Bank provides products FREE of charge to women with limited resources

Taking an active role in your own treatment will improve your quality of life and may speed recovery. Besides peer support, Y-ME provides information on their Web site, www.Y-ME.org, giving you the facts needed to make critical decisions on healthcare options and treatment.

Reaching out to others to share the challenges of breast cancer is a positive step toward managing the disease. Don’t go it alone.

Tammy gives credit to a woman named Michelle in her oncologist’s office who probably helped save her life. Michelle wrote her a note and called almost daily for a few months before Tammy decided to go in for treatment. “I’ve always been independent — I do things on my own,” she says. Michelle’s persistence and sharing her own battle with breast cancer made a difference.

“She was so nice,” says Tammy. “She was one person who seemed to say the right things.” Six years later, Tammy is glad she listened.

WHB offers a variety of books and literature designed to help you manage your cancer treatment. Some locations offer a support group to provide a listening ear. For information call WHB at 888.708.9982.

Reaching out to women everywhere

NOT A CLASSIC, IT’S CLASSIQUE!

Comfort and style for those with special needs

At age 56, Dorothy Rose suffered a heart attack. Twelve years later, her doctors implanted a defibrillator inside her chest to give her a “thump” in the event she had another one. The device detects irregular heartbeats and shocks the heart back to a normal rhythm.

The size of a deck of cards, the defibrillator was positioned so that finding a comfortable bra to wear was difficult. “Put a defibrillator in a man and he puts on his shirt and goes home,” says Dorothy. “A lady has a completely different set of challenges.”

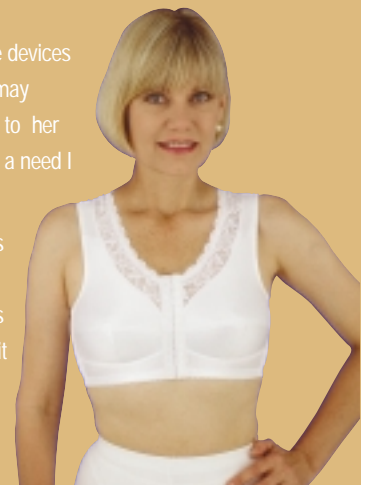
Trying to wear a regular-style bra was uncomfortable for Dorothy. “I had a bump from the defibrillator,” she says. She paid a visit to a corset shop and left disappointed, having received no help at all. A trip to a specialty boutique netted her a prize catch.

Particular about her undergarments, and never owning a front-hooking bra, she took the advice of a knowledgeable saleswoman who offered her a

Classique. “It has wide straps and completely covers my scar area,” says Dorothy. “It provides the coverage I need and doesn’t interrupt the sensitive area near the defibrillator.”

Dorothy believes women who have devices such as pace-makers and defibrillators may benefit from wearing this bra. She clings to her Classique. “I’m really happy. It answered a need I have,” she says. “It feels like me.”

WHB has a variety of specialty bras in all sizes to assist with medical challenges such as arthritis, osteoporosis or back pain. Give us a call — we have it all! 888.708.9982



CANCER SNIFFING DOGS

There may be a lower incidence of dog pound euthanasia as more researchers put gas chamber-bound pooches to work sniffing out cancer in humans.

It is thought that a dog's sense of smell is generally 10,000 to 100,000 times better than a human's. The *British Medical Journal* recently reported that when urine from bladder cancer patients was set out among samples from healthy people or those with other diseases, the dogs — all ordinary pets — were able to identify the cancer patients' urine almost three times more often than would be expected by chance alone.

David Neal, bladder and prostate surgeon and spokesman for Britain's cancer society says it is possible dogs might be able to pick up the scent of cancer because people with the disease shed abnormal proteins in their urine.

In the late 1980s, two London dermatologists were tipped off about a dog's uncanny ability to diagnose disease by a patient whose female Border Collie-Doberman mix constantly sniffed at a mole on her leg, through her pant leg, while ignoring all other moles. She wore shorts one day and the dog tried to bite it off. The mole was diagnosed with a malignant melanoma — the dog had saved her life.

Another instance of a cancer-sniffing pooch involves a man who had a patch of eczema on his leg for 18 years.

His pet Labrador developed an interest in the patch and began to sniff at it through his trousers. It became cancerous, and once the growth was removed, the dog had no further interest in it.

National Geographic News reports that Larry Myers, a professor of veterinary medicine at Alabama's Auburn University, has trained unwanted dogs to detect a variety of substances — "everything from drugs and bombs to off-flavor catfish and agricultural pests." He believes that with the proper training, just about any dog can learn to identify a unique scent. Myers typically works with dogs rescued from the pound.

Director of the Sensory Research Institute at Florida State University in Tallahassee Larry Walker and his wife and colleague, Dianne, plan to scientifically show that canine cancer detection can be done as they study the ability of dogs to detect prostate cancer in human urine samples.

Don't expect see Fido in your physician's office anytime soon. "The work is preliminary," says Walker. He adds that it will be at least another five years before dogs, or any canine-inspired technology, is used on patients.

Sources: *Associated Press HealthNews*
www.nationalgeographic.com

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Amanda Pitzenberger donates her hair to Locks of Love.

(WHB) national spokeswoman for hair loss.

Gemstress, a crafter of a full line of pre-made quality human hair enhancements and synthetic designs, was recently added to the select group of manufacturers carried by WHB. Esteemed as the "Victoria's Secret" of the wig industry, they have a specialty line made especially for those with alopecia.

Women aren't the only ones who need a helping hand. Disadvantaged children suffering from long-term medical hair loss have an advocate in Locks of Love, a not-for-profit organization that purchases prostheses of the highest quality made from donated hair, restoring their confidence and self-esteem. In addition to donations of human hair, Locks of Love also accepts monetary contributions.

Read more about Krystal Garcia, WHB spokeswoman for hair loss, at www.w-h-b.com. Click on "Contact Us." Krystal is happy to answer your questions by e-mail. To find out more about Locks of Love, visit www.locksoflove.org

SHAPING UP FOR A NEW YEAR

It's the New Year. Now that the holidays and festivities are over, it's time to get back to the serious business of good health. But just because you are not at goal weight doesn't mean you can't look sleek and trim.

South Beach, Dr. Phil's diet, Atkins, Weight Watchers — there are many programs from which to choose. While you are trying the right one on for size you can still look shapely. The Body Wrap® is ultralight shapewear that tones and controls before diet and exercise begin.



The Body Wrap offers more than 20 styles to support, enhance, flatten, lift, slenderize or shape you. These undergarments provide all-day firm control without bulky seams. The Purifil-lined crotch quickly releases humidity, giving the ultimate in freshness and hygiene.

Look like a million while you are taking care of those unwanted pounds. For more information on The Body Wrap products, visit the Women's Health Boutique near you. www.w-h-b.com

SIGHT-SAVING EYE DROPS PREVENT GLAUCOMA

Did you know middle-aged African-Americans are almost 20 times more likely to go blind due to glaucoma than are middle-aged whites?

Though the cause of the disease is unknown, it is characterized by too much fluid in the eye and creates no early symptoms or pain resulting from the increased pressure.

There is good news, however. Researchers have found eye drops that lower elevated pressure inside the eye and can delay or possibly prevent the onset of glaucoma in African-Americans at higher risk for developing the disease. The drops are found to reduce the development of primary open-angle glaucoma in African-Americans by almost 50 percent. This is the most common form of glaucoma and one of the nation's leading causes of vision loss.



The Ocular Hypertension Treatment Study, funded by the National Eye Institute (NEI) and the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD), revealed that eight percent of African-American study participants who received the eye drops developed glaucoma. By comparison, 16 percent of the African-American subjects not receiving the drops developed glaucoma.

Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., director of the NEI says, "The results underscore that African-Americans over age 40 should receive a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once every two years to see if they are at higher risk for glaucoma."

For more information, visit www.glaucoma.org or www.healthierliving.org

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