

# To your health

## Improve that smile!

A generation ago, many parents sought orthodontic care for their children only if the children had noticeably "crooked teeth". Nowadays, parents recognize the broad benefits of orthodontic care and are seeking treatment for even subtle improvements in their children's and their own smiles.

Protruding teeth, poor lip closure, difficulty in chewing or biting, and crooked teeth are all possible indications that a child needs braces. But not every orthodontic problem is glaringly obvious. Only a dentist can decide if your child's problem constitutes a genuine "malocclusion" (bad bite) that can be corrected through orthodontic care.

Crowded, crowded and poorly spaced or positioned teeth can be inherited. But various kinds of malocclusions can also be caused by physical and other factors, such as premature loss of one or more baby teeth, or bad oral habits such as persistent thumbsucking past the age of five.

A malocclusion can affect much more than your child's appearance; it can also contribute to a variety of health problems. Crowded, crowded, protruding or widely spaced teeth can make biting and chewing difficult, affecting nutrition and digestion. Malocclusions can also create muscle tension and pain, and may weaken the bones and gums supporting the teeth. Misaligned teeth are more difficult to clean and, therefore, are often more susceptible to dental decay and gum disease.

A regular dental health care program is one of the best ways to spot potential orthodontic problems early in your child's life and keep them from getting worse. The Luzerne County Dental Society recommends a first dental visit for your child around his or her first birthday. Although primary teeth are lost and replaced by permanent teeth between the ages of six and 12, premature loss of baby teeth can have long-term negative effects on a child's dental health.



**DENTAL HEALTH MONTH PLANNED** — Local businesses and members of the Dental Health Committee recently finalized plans for Children's Dental Health Month. Shown seated, from left, Ann Reilly, Community Relations Representative for McDonald's; Bonnie Dombroski, Dental Health Chairman. Standing, Nancy Valunas, Community Relations Representative for McDonald's; Ann Marie Lawrence, Dental Auxiliary, holding her son Jonathan; Randy Lawrence.

## McDonald's sponsors coloring contest

At a recent meeting, plans were finalized between representatives of some local McDonald's restaurants and the Dental Health Committee of the Auxiliary to the Luzerne County Dental Society. McDonald's is participating in the observance of National Children's Dental Health Month again this year. The prizes for the Dental Health

Coloring Contest are sponsored by McDonald's and the Times Leader in conjunction with the Auxiliary and the Dental Society. Dental Health Day at Wyoming Valley Mall will be held on Saturday, Feb. 20 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Ronald McDonald will be at the Mall at 1 p.m. to present a magic show

and visit with the children. The local owner-operators who are involved are Mr. Frank Colletti with restaurants located in Edwardsville, Blackman Plaza and Kidder Street and Carol and Albert Mueller whose establishments are in Mountaintop, Shavertown, Wyoming and Sans Souci Highway, Hanover Township.



## Flowers to help fight cancer

More than 200,000 daffodils will arrive in Wyoming Valley in celebration of Daffodil Days, March 15-20, sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Pictured above are Sally Shea, Shavertown and Judy Fleischman, Wilkes-Barre, chairwomen for the event. Wyoming Valley volunteers will be bringing the "Flower of Hope" to local businesses, restaurants, churches, temples and hospitals. Daffodils will be available for \$3.50 for a bunch of 10 and orders can be placed by calling the American Cancer Society office at 825-7763. Anyone interested in assisting during Daffodil Days is urged to call the A.C.S. office.

## Winter colds can be tough

BY LYNN G. GUISER, M.D.  
Family Medicine Specialist

Feel a cold coming on?

Herbalists might suggest a little garlic before bedtime. Followers of folk medicine may tell you that an "asafetida" bag of coarse herbs around your neck would have kept illness away.

Cold remedies are as old and as numerous as the symptoms they are designed to fight.

Since no cures for the common cold have been discovered, home remedies probably will be around for a long time to come.

But the best thing to do about colds is...avoid them, by not getting run down. When you overwork yourself, you tax your immune system.

A cold is a minor viral infection. Its symptoms are the familiar runny nose, sore throat, coughing and sneezing.

If you have a simple cold, get enough sleep and stay warm. If you don't rest, your cold is more likely to become complicated with one or more bacterial infections.

And if your cold hangs on after five days, or if you are coughing green or yellow sputum from your lungs, or if you have a fever of 102 degrees-plus, then you should see a physician.

Your/family doctor may prescribe drugs to fight the bacterial infection; by not taking care of yourself, you could risk bronchitis, sinusitis, and other infections.

The flu, or influenza, is one of several viruses that create symptoms similar to, but more general and severe, than the common cold. You may have a high fever, that ache-all-over feeling, diarrhea, stomach upset and a throbbing head.

It's important to drink liquids to replace the water you lose when you have a fever or a gastrointestinal problem.

Other conditions to watch out for during cold weather are hypothermia and frostbite.

Hypothermia occurs when the core temperature of your body drops below 95 degrees, Fahrenheit.

Because old age reduces the ability to adapt to temperature changes, older people can become hypothermic in rooms where the temperature is in the seventies. Be sure that someone checks on elderly friends and family members every day, because hypothermic people can drift into coma without ever realizing that they are cold.

Frostbite occurs when exposed parts like fingers and toes become so cold that the water between your body cells actually freezes, forming crystals and damaging the cells. Standard medical practice is to rapidly re-warm frostbitten hands, feet or other parts.

If you are outside, be on guard for a cold, burning sensation and skin redness. Later the skin may turn white. You can treat first-degree frostbite at home simply by warming yourself; but if there are any blisters, the frostbite is more severe and you should see your doctor.

To avoid these problems, you should protect yourself against cold wind and moisture by wearing waterproof, layered clothing. Avoid drinking alcohol because it causes blood vessels near the skin to dilate and lose warmth faster; alcohol is especially dangerous because it can make you feel as if your body is warmer than it is.

For a variety of reasons, including their proven role as cancer-causing agents, you should not smoke cigarettes. In cold weather, the nicotine in tobacco makes blood vessels near your skin constrict so that less blood flows to the other parts of your body, leaving those parts more susceptible to hypothermia.

One last word about the dangers of cold weather: whether huddling, cuddling or layering your blankets, take care of yourself this winter.

## Eye hotline number established

Eyeseight lost through some diseases can be preserved and possibly restored at any age - just ask the more than 200,000 elderly citizens nationwide who have dialed 1-800-222-EYES (3937).

By calling this toll-free Helpline number, eligible Pennsylvania callers receive a referral to a local eye physician and surgeon (ophthalmologist) who has volunteered to provide needed medical eye care through the National Eye Care Project. The ongoing public service program is designed to bring medical eye care and information to the nation's disadvantaged elderly.

Program sponsors - the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and state ophthalmology societies - aren't stopping at 200,000 callers, according to Dorothy Scott, MD, president of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology.

Older Americans suffer more than half of the blinding eye diseases that are diagnosed in the U.S. each year - a statistic ophthalmologists are determined to change through the project.

"Ophthalmologists estimate that about half of elderly blindness can be prevented by early diagnosis and treatment," said Dr. Scott. "The National Eye Care Project has certainly contributed to this effort by providing medical information and removing financial obstacles that may discourage elderly people from seeking much needed care."

Since the project began in June 1986, 14,971 Pennsylvania residents have called the Helpline, and 9,882 have been referred for a comprehensive medical eye exam and treatment for potentially blinding eye diseases. Thus far, Pennsylvania ophthalmologists have treated 2,953 cases of cataracts, 291 cases of glaucoma, 121 cases of diabetic retinopathy and 625 cases of macular degeneration. All of these are potentially blinding diseases.

To be eligible for project services, a caller must be age 65 or older, a U.S. citizen, and no longer have access to an ophthalmologist he or she has seen in the past.

Services provided by the volunteer ophthalmologist are offered at no out-of-pocket cost to the patient. For this project, volunteer ophthalmologists are accepting Medicare and/or other health insurance assignment as payment in full for their services. If the patient lacks insurance coverage, medical eye care is provided without charge.

The National Eye Care Project is open weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Pacific time), 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Alaska, and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Hawaii. The Helpline number is 1-800-222-EYES (3937).

## Proper foot care important

Few people realize that stockings and socks can be harmful to the feet.

"Some individuals develop a rash when their skin is in contact with nylon or other fabrics which are not "natural" substances. Others develop itching, dryness of skin, or blisters from the effects of either materials or dyes. People with such sensitive skin can use silicone creams, however, which form a thin film and offer protection from irritating materials."

It is important to wear hosiery which provides adequate room for the toes. If the stocking is too short, it will tend to bunch the toes together. If the toes are crowded over prolonged periods of time, they can become misaligned. If one toe is forced to override another, the friction and pressure which develops can cause a corn to develop.

Body stocking and pantyhose diminish the probability of tension on the foot during ordinary activity. However, the foot portion of the hose must be long enough to accommodate the foot without compressing the toes.



**HEART PROGRAM DEVELOPED** — Shown at a recently held announcement reception at the John Heinz Institute are, from left, James J. Mearland, M.D., member, General's cardiac surgery team; Arthur J. Roberts, M.D., director, General's Cardiac Surgery Department; Laura Novakowski, manager, General's step down and cardiac services unit; Stanley Rosneblatt, acting medical director, Allied Services and John Heinz Institute; Miranda Curcio, Allied Services board director; Angela Bell, vice president of community relations, Allied Services and John Heinz Institute and Richard J. Aronica, vice president of medical services, Allied Services and John Heinz Institute.

## First cooperative program designed

Wilkes-Barre General Hospital and John Heinz Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine have developed a unique, cooperative Cardiac Surgery Rehabilitation Program for General's open-heart surgery patients. The program, the first of its kind in the region, is designed to help selected open-heart surgery patients at Wilkes-Barre General obtain additional specialized physical - occupational - psychological social therapy before returning home.

The first level of cardiac surgery rehabilitation consists of basic physical therapy during

the first week to 10 days postoperatively at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital. The second level consists of additional physical - occupational - psychological - social therapy at John Heinz Institute, and is offered to selected patients well enough to leave the acute care of the General Hospital but who still are not ready to go home because they require more physical strengthening or do not have anyone to care for them their first days at home. Development of the cooperative second level program was a grass roots endeavor from personnel at both major institu-

## Seniors eligible

BY SEN. CHARLES D. LEMMOND, JR. R-20TH  
Special to The Post

Persons age 65 or older may be eligible to receive dental care at reduced fees under the Pennsylvania Dental Association's (PDA) Access to Care Program, according to Sen. Charles D. Lemmond, Jr., (R-20).

Under this program, eligible senior citizens will be referred to a participating dentist in their community and qualify for reduced fees on all dental services including, exams, cleaning, denture work and other dental treatments.

Sen. Lemmond reports that statistics provided by the Pennsylvania Dental Association indicate that only 35 percent of people over the age of 65 receive regular dental care. "This program is designed to help senior citizens and those who live on a fixed income by providing access to affordable dental care," said Sen. Lemmond.

Since its inception in 1984, over 12,000 senior citizens have received treatment under the Access to Care Program.

To be eligible for this program individuals must:

- Be age 65 or older;
- Have no private dental insurance;
- No federal, state or other dental health insurance;
- Have a total annual household income of 12,000 for a single person and 15,000 for a married couple.

"I encourage eligible senior citizens in the 20th Senatorial District to take advantage of this opportunity to receive affordable dental care, and maintain good oral health," said Sen. Lemmond.

For additional information on this program, area senior citizens may call the PDA toll-free at 1-800-692-7256.

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