

# FAITH & HEALTH

(your link to wholistic health)



January 2006

## SPIRITUALITY'S IMPACT ON HEART HEALTH

So much information is provided in the media and medical journals about the proper care of our hearts with exercise, diet, weight control, and medication. In the Bible there are more than 700 references to the heart in both the Old and New Testaments.

If the heart is "broken" physically or spiritually, an individual can become very depressed, withdrawn, or die. In Ezekiel 36:26 our Lord states, "I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts."

Researchers have proven that there is a definite connection between one's emotional state and the physical health of the heart. Dr. Ornish stated in his book, Love and Survival: The Scientific Basis for the Healing Power of

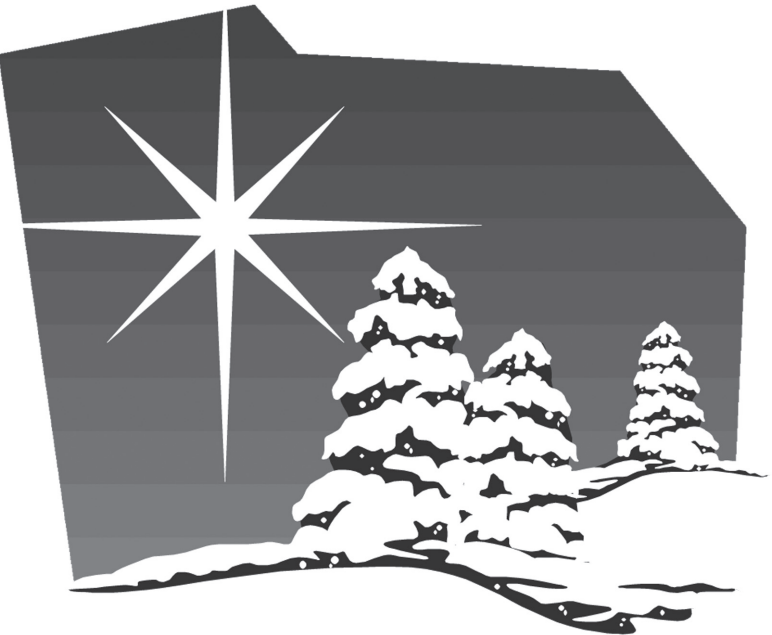
Intimacy, if there were medications that would have the

same impact as the power of love and intimacy, every doctor would prescribe them for their patients to keep healthy. Unfortunately, in today's high tech world, many of us have lost our personal connection with family, friends and neighbors. Fear, mistrust, and time constraints have caused people to distance themselves from others, often forgetting those individuals who are lonely, depressed and vulnerable.

As Christians, how can we soften our "hardened hearts" to help heal the "lonely" hearts in society?

We need to model ourselves after Christ and demonstrate kindness and respect towards all people. First, we must mend our broken relationships, forgiving those towards whom we've been harboring bad feelings. To love others we must love and accept ourselves-even our faults and weaknesses. Once we release our anger and negativity, our hearts will strengthen and our spirit will soar with renewed energy and joy!

As parish nurses, we empower our parishioners to nurture their spirits and keep their physical selves healthy. Let us pray that God "mends" our weary hearts so we can find joy and love one another! **RM**



## February Health Observances

American Heart Month ..... [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)  
 National Wear Red Day - February 3, 2006 ..... [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/)  
 National Burn Prevention Week - February 6-12.... [www.ameriburn.org](http://www.ameriburn.org)  
 ..... [www.littlebootspublishing.com/bernieburn](http://www.littlebootspublishing.com/bernieburn)  
 ..... [www.shrinershq.org](http://www.shrinershq.org)

## New Risk Factors in the Diagnosis of Heart Disease

I have worked with cardiac patients for approximately 24 years of my nursing career. Researchers have discovered that metabolic problems, inflammation and infection can lead to harmful changes in the lining of coronary arteries, increasing one's risk of developing a heart attack or stroke.

In recent years, homocysteine blood levels are being monitored and treated to decrease the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Homocysteine is a by-product of an essential amino acid found in our blood stream that some individuals cannot excrete. Too much of this amino acid irritates the arterial lining, causing atherosclerosis to develop that can lead to heart attack, stroke and clots. Many individuals diagnosed with cardiac disease under the age of 60 have elevated homocysteine levels and normal cholesterol and/or triglyceride levels. Folic acid is prescribed to lower the level of this acid in patients at risk. Dark green vegetables, fortified grain products and fruit are natural sources of folic acid. Neurologists routinely order this blood test when dealing with patients presenting with stroke symptoms.

C-reactive protein is a biological marker of inflammation associated with patients diagnosed with heart disease, stroke, or peripheral vascular occlusions. Research studies document that elevated levels of this protein in the body may be a better predictor of C.A.D. than cholesterol. To treat elevated C-reactive protein blood levels, a daily Aspirin is prescribed along with exercise and statins.

Metabolic changes that produce insulin resistance in the body can increase your risk of developing C.A.D. Insulin resistance formerly was referred to as "borderline" diabetes with slight elevations in fasting blood sugar. Doctors now classify and educate patients with slightly elevated blood sugars to minimize their carbohydrate consumption to decrease their risk of developing diabetes that accelerates the progression of atherosclerosis.

A new finding being isolated in some individuals with heart disease is the presence of the bacterial Chlamydia Pneumoniae or the virus Cytomegalo in atherosclerotic plaques. The treatment to destroy these plaques is antibiotics.

As parish nurses, we teach our parishioners to get annual physicals that include bloodwork, EKG and blood pressure monitoring. Simple blood tests will identify these cardiac risk factors and lead to the proper treatment and prevention of many types of cardiac disease. **RM**

## Did You Know?

250,000 children are burned every year in the U.S.? (Ages 0-17 seriously enough to require medical attention)  
 15,000 children are hospitalized with burn injuries  
 1,100 children die from fire and burn injuries  
 200,000 children are burned by contact with hot substances and objects

### What are the most frequent sources of these injuries?

Scalds from spilled food and beverages: 100,000  
 Scalds from tap water: 5,000  
 Contact with hot objects: 60,000 including  
 Clothing irons, hair curlers and stoves

### What are other frequent sources of burns to children?

Fireworks: 3,200  
 Gasoline: 1,500  
 Cigarettes and other tobacco products: 1,500 **RM**

Source: Little Boots Publishing, 2005



## March Health Observances

National Nutrition Month ..... [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)  
 National Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Month ... [www.ncfsfa.org](http://www.ncfsfa.org)  
 National Sleep Awareness Week – March 28-April 3 .....  
 ..... [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)

## Sleepless in America

Back in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Sufi mystic poet Rumi knew the merits of sleep. Goodness knows he needed his, living first under threat of Mongol invasions in his native Afghanistan and then, as a member of the embattled Muslim faith in Iraq and Turkey during the Crusades.

*Knowing that conscious decisions  
 And personal memory  
 Are much too small a place to live,  
 Every human being streams at night  
 Into the loving nowhere, or during the day,  
 In some absorbing work.*

**From:** The Essential Rumi, trans.

In the Bible, some key events occurred while people were sleeping, such as:

- God crafted Eve from Adam's rib (Gen.2)
- Jacob dreamed of a ladder to heaven (Gen.28)
- Jacob's favorite son, Joseph, had prolific dreams (Gen.37-50)
- Joseph learned that Mary would give birth to Jesus (Matt.1-2)

Discovery Health states that 40 million Americans suffer from chronic sleep problems, while an additional 20-30 million have periodic trouble sleeping. Expectations are that this problem will only increase as we age. The National Sleep Foundation offers these tips for getting to sleep and staying there:

1. Maintain a regular bed and wake time schedule, including weekends
2. Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine such as soaking in a hot bath and then reading a book or listening to soothing music
3. Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool
4. Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillow
5. Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex
6. Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before your regular bedtime

7. Exercise regularly. It is best to complete your workout at least a few hours before bedtime
8. Avoid caffeine close to bedtime
9. Avoid nicotine
10. Avoid alcohol use close to bedtime

Remember that the God who kept us safe yesterday and today, will protect us tonight and tomorrow, too. *I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the Lord sustains me.* Ps. 3:5 **RM**

## Emergency Numbers

*From Your Parish Nurse Ministry*

- When in sorrow - call John 14*
- When people fail you - call Psalm 27*
- When you have sinned - call Psalm 51*
- When you worry - call Matthew 19-34*
- When you are in danger - call Psalm 91*
- When God seems far away - call Psalm 139*
- When your faith needs stirring - call Hebrews 11*
- When you are lonely and fearful - call Psalm 23*
- When you grow bitter and critical - call I Corinthians 13*
- When you are not sure what it means to be Christian - call II Corinthians 5:15-19*
- When you feel down and out - call Romans 8:31*
- When you want peace and rest - call Matthew 11:25-30*
- When the world seems bigger than God - call Psalm 90*
- When you leave home for labor or travel - call Psalm 121*
- When your prayers grow narrow or selfish - call Psalm 67*
- When you want courage for a task - call Joshua 1*
- When you are having trouble getting along with your neighbor - call Romans 12*
- When you think of investments and returns - call Mark 10*
- When you are depressed - call Psalm 27*
- When your pocketbook is empty - call Psalm 37*
- When you are losing confidence in people - call Corinthians 13*
- When people seem unkind - call John 15*
- When you are discouraged about your work - call Psalm 126*
- When you need reassurance - call Psalm 145:18 **RM***

## Dates to Remember

“Substance Abuse and Dependence: A Faith-Based Health Concern”, for Clergy and Parish Nurses. Two dates to choose from – **Friday, February 3, 2006**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Providence Hospital, Fisher Center Auditorium, or **Friday, March 10, 2006** at St. John Oakland Hospital Education Center. For more information, call Marian Bjerke, 248-849-2763.

**Parish Nurse Training Course:** Tuesday evenings, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. at Providence Hospital, DePaul Center, Cafeteria C, March 7 through May 16, excluding April 18. Registration details forthcoming. Offered through U of D Mercy, Sr. Judy Mouch. Contact your Parish Nurse Coordinator for details!

**Winter Parish Nurse Partnership Support Group**, St. John Oakland Hospital, Education Center. **Thursday, February 9, 2006**. “Prayer”, “Pain Management” and “Flip, Switch and Change.” 2.0 CEU’s anticipated (All nurses are required to have one CEU on Pain Management for renewal of their nursing license.) St. John Oakland is located on Dequindre, North of Eleven Mile Road in Madison Heights. Continental breakfast and fellowship at 8 a.m., followed by program from 8:30 a.m. until Noon. **Save the date: Spring Partnership Meeting-May 11, 2006.**

**West Side Parish Nurse Network/Detroit Parish Nurse Network-“God Teaches Us”, Wednesday, January 11**, Noon until 2 p.m. “Pain Management” 1.0 CEU Nardin Park Methodist Church, 29887 W. 11 Mile Rd. (just east of Orchard Lake Rd.) Bring your nursing license number. **Save the date: Wednesday, March 8**, Noon until 2 p.m. “Coping with Declining Health” presented by Mercy Home Care\* Cranbrook Hospice.

“God With Us”, **February 20, 2006**, Noon until 2 p.m. “Islam”, Continued study of various faith practices. Health Care Partners, 18000 W. 9 Mile Road, Southfield. Central location, Easy access from Freeway (I-696), Plentiful safe, free parking! **RM**

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## WELCOME:

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our newest partnership churches:

- First United Methodist of Birmingham, along with their parish nurse, *Barb Babs*.
- Hebron Church, Detroit, Michigan, and their lay health minister, *Roshunda Lance*.
- Our first clustered parishes health ministry-All Saints Catholic Church, Memphis; Holy Rosary Catholic Mission, Smith Creek; St. Philip Neri Catholic Church, Columbus and their lead health minister, *Janet Parker*.

Please add *Barb*, *Roshunda*, and *Janet*, along with their health teams and churches, to your prayer list as they begin to develop their health ministries. **RM**

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## Winter fruits and vegetables

- **Acorn squash** is rich in potassium, lycopene, folate and vitamin A & C
- **Brussel sprouts** contain vitamin K
- **Carrots** are bursting with vitamin A
- **Cauliflower** contains vitamin C
- **Sweet potatoes** have beta-carotene, vitamin C, folate, calcium and magnesium
- **Bananas** are a good source of magnesium and potassium
- **Blueberries** have antioxidant benefits and vitamin K (If you can't buy the fresh, buy frozen)
- **Cranberry juice** is loaded with vitamin C
- **Oranges** are a good source of vitamin C and potassium
- **Dried prunes** give you fiber, potassium, vitamin A and vitamin B6
- **Red Delicious apples** are one of the best sources of antioxidants – you have to eat the peel to get the full benefit. If you have to peel the apple, eat a Northern Spy or Cortland that has a high amount of the antioxidant in the flesh

Source: MSA Extension

## WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

Mary Ann Martin, RN, BAS  
 Parish Nurse Coordinator  
 Providence Pavilion  
 248-849-2518 Fax: 248-849-5404  
 Email: maryann.martin@stjohn.org

Designer: Diane Apfel