



Scoop



How's Your Heart?
American Heart Month

Friday, February 18, 2000

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - HOUSTON MEDICAL SCHOOL

EVENTS TO KNOW:

- **Preventive Cardiology Forum X**, TOMORROW, Sat., Feb. 19, 7 a.m.-12:20 p.m., featuring **Dean Buja, Drs. Francisco Fuentes, Hasan Garan, Patricia Liehr, Christie Ballantyne, Robert Roberts, Darwin Labarthe, and Thomas Pearson**, MSB 3.001.
- **Architectural Tour**, TOMORROW, Sat., Feb. 19, 10 - 11 a.m., conducted by the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance, \$10/person. Meet at Market Square.
- **MSRDP Annual Faculty Meeting**, Wed., Feb. 23, 4 - 6 p.m., MSB 3.001.

UTmost Interest

Dr. Firyal Khan, Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences, judged the Biological and Physical Sciences Division of the Kinkaid School Science Fair for sixth and eighth graders...**Dr. Vaseem Ali**, Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences, is the Year 2000 Houston Obstetrics and Gynecology President...The UT-H Medical School's homepage, <www.med.uth.tmc.edu>, was cited by MedExplorer, <www.medexplorer.com>, as a top-rated **Continuing Education** web page...**Dr. Mona Eissa**, Pediatrics, was honored by the American Society of Hypertension in recognition of her knowledge and management of clinical hypertension and related diseases...**Dr. William Dowhan**, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, spoke on "Lipids as Signals for Membrane Protein Topological Organization," in Taos, NM.

FYI - The Medical School Fitness Center is sponsoring a free blood pressure screening, 10 a.m. - noon, Mon., Feb. 28, Leather Lounge.

REMINDERS - Applications for Jump Start funds are due Fri., Feb. 25. Contact Faculty Affairs, 500-5100. Also *Call for Nominations for Mentor of the Year* deadline is Wed., March 1. Send to **Dean Buja**, c/o Faculty Affairs, MSB 7.130. Also next Tues., Feb. 22, 5th floor Gallery, is the Mentor/Mentee Reception. Questions, call **Juanita Mattingly**, x5103.

UT REGENTS APPROVE RESEARCH BUILDING FUNDING

Meeting in Houston Feb. 8-9, the UT Board of Regents expanded the six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the UT System by \$468.4 million. Of specific interest to UT-Houston was the approval of \$50 million in Permanent University Funds (PUF) to serve as the underpinning of a research expansion project to include three new research buildings — a research tower adjacent to the Medical School, a new research building for the School of Public Health, and a building to house neurobiology and childhood development research near the Recreation Center on Knight Road. For more details see this week's Feb. 21 issue of *Monday Morning*. Says **Dean Max Buja**, "This is wonderful news and represents an important step in planning much needed new research facilities at the Medical School. It is a testament to the quality of our clinical and basic science research faculty and the hard work of many, including **President Low**, to support our research enterprise and space needs."

Thanks to voter approval of Proposition 17 last November, the regents have been able to pledge about 25 percent more than the amount they had authorized last fall for System-wide capital improvement projects. The CIP is approved for planning purposes and each major construction project must be brought to the board for individual approval and requires UT components to raise funds to meet project costs. (see *Scoop* 11/19/99).

UNDERSTANDING GANG CULTURE SPEAKER, MARCH 2

Author **Mike Knox** will speak on understanding gang culture on Thursday, **March 2**, noon, in the Mental Sciences Institute Auditorium, Room 110. Knox wrote the book *Gangsta in the House* and helped create the Houston Police Department's Westside Command Divisional Gang Unit. The program is hosted by the UT Work/Life Program and the Mental Sciences Institute. Refreshments provided. For more information, contact **Emma Lamb**, at 713/500-3013.

TODAY'S STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO GRANT GETTING

A reminder that today, in Room 3.001, from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., senior research investigators are staging a review of an actual grant proposal. Faculty, students, and administration have signed up. This "Informed and Systematic Approach to Grant Seeking (Common Sense?)" seminar is co-sponsored by the Office of Research Services (ORS) and **Dr. John Grabowski**, Psychiatry, director, Substance Abuse Research Center.

STUDENTS RECEIVE DORIS SIMON TRAVEL PRIZE

Fourth-year students **Stacy Bacon, Sara Journey, and Grant Taylor** are recipients of the 1999-2000 Organization of Faculty Wives and Women Faculty Doris Simon Travel Prize to help defray the cost of their residency interviews. Congratulations to all. Recipients are selected on the basis of financial need, academic excellence and scope of residency applications. The Organization of Faculty Wives and Women Faculty has been a constant supporter of many good Medical School causes and welcomes contributions to the Doris Simon Student Fund via the Office of Development to provide support for future student travel needs. A flyer is available in the Office of Community Affairs and Public Education, MSB G.004.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-HOUSTON
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER



Medical School

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PART II: PERIMENOPAUSE, MENOPAUSE, & OTHER NATURAL WONDERS OF WOMEN'S MID - LIFE

Editor's Note: This is the second in a two-part series on the subjects of perimenopause and menopause.

There is much fine tuning that presently goes on between a woman and her gynecologist or physician. In the younger patients, doctors may prescribe low-doses of oral contraceptives, such as Loestrin FE 1/20, Alesse, Mircelte, or Levlite, to control some of perimenopause's problems and symptoms – menstrual irregularity and hot flashes and night sweats. This also provides contraception if needed. Birth control pills, used in this way, essentially turn off a woman's fluctuating estrogen levels and supply it to her in low regulated doses. These cycle regulators also protect against ovarian and endometrial cancer as well as lower the risk of benign or fibrocystic breast disease, by a 35-50% decrease.



Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and Estrogen Replacement Therapy (ERT) literally add estrogen to a woman's body. As mentioned last week, there is ongoing research, including a \$628 million *Women's Health Initiative* study involving 27,500 women, to come out in 2005, on different medical options for women during perimenopause and menopause. "Unlike other studies, this is a prospective, randomized trial," commented **Dr. Shahla Nader**, co-director, UT-Houston Medical School Office of Women's Health, professor, Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences. HRT is commonly prescribed when a woman is menopausal, that is, when she is no longer making estrogen, and when there are other obvious symptoms like hot flashes and vaginal dryness. The most common hormone replacement therapy prescription for menopause is Premarin, which also comes in a vaginal cream form for relief of local symptoms. Other options include Estrace, from a plant compound, Ogen, from a modified plant estrogen, skin patches such as Estraderm, and designer estrogen-like compounds called SERMs (Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulators), such as raloxifene, marketed as Evista. The latter has no stimulating effect on the uterus or breast but may cause hot flashes. During perimenopause, adds Nader, hormone replacement therapy options, "may need some adjustment to avoid erratic menses."

What can women do? The experts, such as Nader, advise:

- ✓ Relax.
- ✓ Keep calcium levels up and take your vitamins. 400 IU vitamin D; 1,000-2,000 mg time-release vitamin C; 400 IU vitamin E; 10,000 vitamin A; and 200 mg time-release B6. Vitamin B6, also known as pyridoxine, may help mood swings, for both men and women. Doctors recommend on average 1000 - 1500 mg daily calcium intake. If you have reached menopause, are not on hormonal therapy, or have additional risk factors for osteoporosis, you may want to consider the DEXA (dual-energy X-ray absorbitometry) test for measuring your bone mineral density. Good sources of calcium include: milk, yogurt, cheese, oysters, sardines, canned salmon with bones, dark-green leafy vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, kale, collard and mustard greens, chard, cabbage, and watercress. Vitamin C, carotene and fiber sources include: oranges, grapefruit, carrots, winter squash, tomatoes, and cauliflower. Vitamin E sources include: apples, apricots, blackberries, yams, mangoes, papayas, asparagus, celery leaves, lamb, hazelnuts, and haddock.
- ✓ Reduce your fat intake. And control weight gain.
- ✓ Drink lots of water (8 glasses a day). Eat smart. Limit caffeine and alcohol.
- ✓ Exercise regularly. For bone maintenance, include weight-bearing exercises in your routine.
- ✓ Be prepared ahead of time; use over-the-counter products to increase vaginal lubrication; dress to stay cool.
- ✓ Don't smoke.
- ✓ Soy foods such as tofu, two ounces crumbled over a salad, may be an option.
- ✓ Develop an attitude of gratitude. Take time to pursue healthful hobbies such as gardening, painting or growing friendships. Try some breathing, meditation, and relaxation techniques that can help regulate your body.



While estrogen is not the only sex hormone produced by women, it has star quality. "Women who still have a uterus need to take an additional hormone called progestin, if they take estrogen," says Nader. Estrogen itself is linked to increased cognitive skills, sexual vigor, restoring moisture to dry skin, and luster and shine to brittle hair. Concludes Nader, "Observational studies have linked estrogen treatment with lower incidence of heart disease, and estrogen has been shown to improve cholesterol profiles." Heart disease, not breast cancer, is the biggest health threat to American women, killing 250,000 a year from heart attacks and another 90,000 deaths from strokes. Thus, the celebrity hormone of female baby boomers is also an amazingly efficient sentry to women's health.

- C. O'Brien