

One of Every Three Women Will Be Affected by Heart Disease

Breast cancer is the disease most women fear. The statistic that one in every eight women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime has become fixed ominously in the lexicon of women's health issues. But a significant spate of recent scientific studies has modified this perception. Indeed, heart disease kills more women every year than breast cancer, ovarian or uterine cancer, stroke, and HIV combined. The statistics are staggering. Heart disease strikes one out of every three women; more than 500,000 women die in the United States each year of cardiovascular disease, while 40,000 do so from breast cancer. Yet the public's perception continues to thrive that heart disease strikes men predominantly.

The American Heart Association recently found that over the past two decades, the number of men who succumbed to heart disease fell from 510,000 to 440,000, presumably owing to better prevention, diagnosis, and treatment methods, while the num-



Maintaining Your Health on Mackinac

By Yvan Silva, M.D.

ber of women who died annually rose from 490,000 to 510,000. It is estimated that 6.4 million women in the U.S. have heart disease. In a recent study, 58% of women who were dissatisfied with their medical care blamed their doctors for not knowing the significance of this issue. Indeed, in a 1999 national survey of doctors, only 55% correctly identified heart disease as the greatest health risk for women older than 50.

The differences between women and men, in this regard, are rapidly emerging, and require emphasis. It is not

entirely true that hormones play a protective role in premenopausal women, although women are usually affected in their 60s, while men first develop symptoms a decade earlier. Heart attacks strike 9,000 women younger than 45 each year. For reasons that are not clear, cardiovascular disease is more fatal in women than men, leaving women more severely disabled with congestive heart failure and stroke. Studies are underway to define the subtle differences in how women's cardiovascular systems respond to stress, hormones, excess

dietary fat, and cholesterol control, and the ill effects from smoking and alcohol consumption. Pre-menopausal women do not often have heart attacks, while postmenopausal women become more vulnerable than men. Smoking is believed to increase the risk of heart disease more significantly than men. The signs of an oncoming heart attack may differ between the sexes. The common symptoms of chest pain, a crushing sensation in the chest and shortness of breath, do occur in women as well as in men; however, atypical symptoms of nausea, dizziness, and pressure between the shoulder blades may occur more frequently in women. In many women, the first heart attack is fatal because previous symptoms and risk factors were ignored.

The current initiative is to educate women that, as in men, lifestyle modifications of a healthy diet, regular physical exercise, management of high blood pressure, and cholesterol-lowering drugs are vital. Smoking is the most dangerous killer for both sexes; diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, excess weight, and inactivity relate to both sexes. Women are more often overweight than men, appear to be affected more adversely by stress, and are less likely to exercise.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute has solicited the help of several well known individuals. First Lady Laura Bush has been quoted as saying, "Women take care of all the people in the family - their children, their husbands - but

they sometimes don't take care of themselves." The goals of a recent campaign are to make sure that women know that heart disease is the No. 1 killer for their gender, and that they can change their lifestyles to prevent it.

To summarize: Only 8% of women in the U.S. know that heart disease is their No. 1 killer, a greater threat than any cancer. A woman has a 50% chance of dying from her first heart event, while the chance for a man is 30%. Of the women who survive the first heart attack, 38% will die within a year, compared with 25% of men. Heart failure disables 46% of women after a heart attack, and 22% of men.

The practical aspects gained from this information? See your doctor regularly and discuss the issues relating to high risks for heart disease. Do not use tobacco. Maintain a healthy weight balanced with a program of regular exercise, 30 minutes a day for most days of the week. Eat a healthy diet with at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Maintain compliance with your management of diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. While this appears daunting, the fact remains that heart disease in women can be prevented, and that attention to the possibility of heart attack by early recognition and treatment is very effective, especially with the latest technological advances.

Dr. Silva is a professor of surgery at Wayne State University and a resident of Woodbluff on Mackinac Island.

New Clothing Store Opens on Main Street

By Eric Fish

There's a new kind of clothing store on Mackinac Island's Main Street, nestled on each side of the Murray Hotel. The store, Shirt Off My Back, which opened for its inaugural year on the Island May 11, features a little bit of everything for the visitor.

Aside from witty, creative slogans lining the fronts and backs of many shirts, the shop includes Mackinac Island apparel and a separate ladies store specializing in female resort wear.

"We have a sense of humor," said Faith Gaubault, who co-manages the store with her husband, Michael. "You can have a sense of humor and sell T-shirts."

The Gaubaults know this from their company's history.

Patrick Somers, owner of Retco, Inc., has similar stores in Colorado and Wyoming and now has expanded his business as far east as Mackinac Island.

The Gaubaults have been with Retco for four years and each managed their own year-around store in Wyoming prior to the opening of Mackinac Island's Shirt Off My Back.

As a native of St. Ignace, Mrs. Gaubault has a special place in her heart for the Mackinac Island area. She met Mr. Gaubault, originally from Jamaica, on the Island, was married on the Island, and now is working on the Island with her husband.

"I'm excited," she said. "It's comfortable, it's what you know, it's home. I don't know if anyone can really describe what it's like to be home, but we were both very excited to come. It's a lot of fun."

Not only is it nice for Mrs. Gaubault to be home and close to family, but it gives her the opportunity to rear their nine-month-old son, Michael Jr. (MJ), on familiar grounds.

"Anytime you go back home to work, it's a good thing," she said.

In Wyoming, much of the business was conducted in the summer, she notes, but here, all



Managers Faith and Michael Gaubault stand at the check-out counter at the Shirt Off My Back clothing store. Shirt Off My Back opened for its first year of business on Mackinac Island May 11.

of the Gaubaults' business will be done in the summer.

"Besides the obvious ferry boat and bicycles, you have to do all of your business in six months," Mrs. Gaubault said. "Your work here is a lot more condensed."

With the help of eight additional staff workers, the

Gaubaults are keeping store hours from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. When tourist season picks up, they expect to extend the evening hours to 11 p.m.

"Right now we're working seven days a week," Mrs. Gaubault said. "We come on the first boat and leave on the last one."

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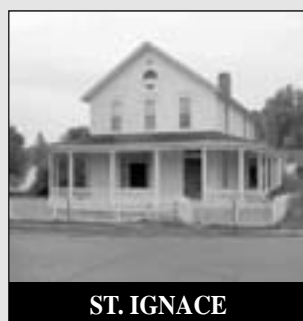
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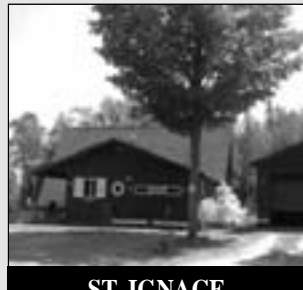
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