

# Health Page

## Toll Free Number For Cancer Advice

(NAPS) -- Edith V. is a fighter -- and a survivor. She was courageous in battling two bouts with cancer, but when her doctor recently diagnosed a third, unrelated cancer in her throat, her spirits flagged.

"I just didn't know where to turn," Edith said. "I didn't know how I would find the strength to go on." Then she found out about the Cancer Care Counseling Line, 1-800-813-HOPE.

Cancer is often a frightening, overwhelming experience. Friends and family members may feel they don't know what to do or say, and in many communities, professional support for cancer patients and their families is very limited -- or nonexistent. People don't know where to turn for information or guidance.

Cancer Care, Inc., a New York-based social service organization, is one of the few with a large staff of professional,

accredited social workers. For more than 50 years, Cancer Care has offered information, education, counseling and financial support to patients and their families. Last year, thanks to a grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb, the agency was able to expand its services through an 800 number staffed by licensed clinical social workers.

"Edith was very downhearted when she called," said Jane Levy, Social Work Supervisor, of the Counseling Line. Ms. Levy, an accredited social worker, talked with Edith about the resources she had in her life, and within herself -- her family, her church, her own beliefs.

"I reminded her of her earlier courage, and helped her think about how she could use them again," Jane Levy said.

The Cancer Care Counseling Line, 1-800-813-HOPE, is free of charge to all callers and open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (EST).

## World Health Organization Warns Of 'Frightening' TB Trend

London -- Tuberculosis is spreading at a "frightening" rate around the world, killing nearly three million people in 1995 and likely to kill 100 million in the next 50 years if present trends continue, the World Health Organization said.

The United Nations agency said nearly 15 million people are sick with TB today and a half billion could become ill in the next 50 years. Worse yet, it said an increasing number of victims contract often-incurable, multidrug-resistant TB because of faulty treatment programs.

"We could return to the day when there was no cure for TB," said Dr. Arata Kochi, Director of the agency's global TB program.

A WHO report noted that New York City has spent hundreds of millions of dollars fighting multidrug-resistant TB, and outbreaks have been reported in Chicago, Atlanta, London, Milan and Paris. Chicago has about 800 cases, according to a recent estimate.

"We underestimate hugely the power of this disease and its ability to kill," said Dr. Paul Nunn, Chief of Research on TB for WHO.

WHO sounded an initial warning about the global TB epidemic at a conference in London three years ago, but efforts to curb the disease since then have been "dangerously inadequate," Kochi said.

He told a news conference:

- TB is the world's greatest killer

of adults, and last year it destroyed more lives than at any time in history.

- It is the leading infectious killer of women, who are particularly susceptible after childbirth, and is claiming more than 1 million women victims each year.

- It is the leading killer of HIV-positive people, the cause of death in one of every three AIDS patients.

- Half the world's 50 million refugees and displaced persons may be infected.

Kochi stressed that TB is an airborne disease that can be contracted by inhaling a TB germ coughed or sneezed into the air, and people in wealthy and poor countries alike are susceptible.

The WHO report cited 15 outbreaks of TB that have occurred in various parts of the United States during the past two years.

It projected that, between 1990 and the year 2000, there would be 17.9 million cases in South and Southeast Asia, 13.4 million in Africa, 10.4 million in East Asia and the Pacific, 3.2 million in Latin America, 1.1 million in Eastern Europe, 420,000 in Western Europe and 120,000 in the U.S. and Canada.

Although WHO itself has been criticized in some circles for not devoting more money to fighting the disease, Kochi said the budget had increased to \$8 million today from \$4 million in 1993. The London Conference in 1993 recommended an outlay of \$20 million over two years.

## Walnuts Myth Has Grain Of Truth

(NAPS) -- Historic foods like honey, citrus fruits and walnuts have been associated with medicinal properties since the dawn of time. Even today, college students in Asia are apt to down fistfuls of walnuts in an effort to improve their test scores because walnuts are reputed to be a brain food. That bit of lore is based on walnuts' long noted resemblance to the human brain.

While specific food legends may be pure entertainment, modern science is showing that many historically popular foods are indeed good for you and should be part of a healthy diet.

Walnuts were part of our ancestors' diet as far back as 7000 B.C. They are a good source of protein and fiber as well as vitamins like B6 and thiamin, and minerals like copper and magnesium. They also contain essential fatty acids that the body cannot make on its own. Walnuts are one of the best non-fish sources of important omega-3 fatty acids that help protect the heart.

It's important to remember that not all fat is bad. The kind to avoid is saturated fat, the kind found in animal products. Unsaturated fats, like monounsaturated and polyunsaturated, the kind found in walnuts, provide vital protection against certain diseases.

Recent studies have shown that walnuts can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. A study at Loma Linda University published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1993 showed that walnuts can reduce your total and "bad" cholesterol, thus reducing your coronary risks and another study at the University of California at San Francisco published in Stroke, the journal of the American Heart Association, in 1995, suggested that linolenic acid, which is found in walnuts, can help prevent blood clotting and arrhythmia that causes strokes.

It's easy to get the nutritious benefits of walnuts. Just sprinkle them on salads, fruit, cereals, vegetables, rice and pasta to add wonderful taste and texture.

## New Drugs To Hit The Market

Here are two exciting drugs -- one recently approved, one about to be -- to help safeguard your health.

\* Until recently, hormone replacement therapy - a controversial treatment that may increase the risk of breast cancer -- was the only alternative for post-menopausal women hoping to halt bone loss and check the development of osteoporosis. But a new class of experimental drugs called aminobisphosphonates -- which slow bone resorption -- is about to give women another option. In a recent study of 994 women with osteoporosis, those who received Fosamax (Merck & Co.), plus

500 mg calcium supplements daily, had half as many vertebral fractures as women who got a placebo. FDA approval is expected soon.

\* The growing wave of antibiotic-resistant infection is testing medicine's resources, but help is on the way. A new drug cocktail that includes the recently approved medication Zosyn (Wyeth-Ayerst laboratories) strips the bugs of their defenses, allowing the accompanying antibiotics to go in for the kill. A recent University of Maryland study showed that Zosyn boosted by 500 percent antibiotics' ability to fight these potentially deadly infections.

