

Happiness
by *Through*
Otto McClarrin *Health*

From Our Readers

TEST URGED FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

All pregnant women past the age of 35 face a high risk of mongoloid births and should be offered a test to determine whether their child will be normal, medical researchers have advised.

The test should be also given to expectant mothers of all ages who are Rh-negative, diabetic, have high blood pressure, or have a family history of defective children, according to the report published recently in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The test is known as amniocentesis. It is a highly accurate and safe procedure for both the mother and the unborn child, the researchers for the National Institute of Child and Human Development in Bethesda, Md., said recently.

Amniocentesis involves the extraction and analysis of fluid from the sac surrounding the fetus inside the pregnant woman. The test can predict many potential abnormalities and can detect the sex of the baby some months before birth.

The institute's report said the test "served to provide reassurance, assistance in having normal children, and, in numerous instances, avoidance of abortion.

Of 1,040 women who underwent the test during the five-year study period, more than 95 percent were reassured that there was no abnormalities in the fetus, the researchers said. Another 39 women learned that their child would be seriously deformed and elected to have abortions. Diagnostic accuracy was measured at 99.4 percent.

RESEARCHERS WARN ABOUT PREMATURE ANNOUNCEMENTS CONCERNING CANCER

Premature announcements of breakthroughs in treating cancer or sweeping statements that common substances cause cancer are hurting efforts to inform Americans of real medical progress, researchers said recently.

The officials said public pronouncements must tread a fine line between too much hope and too much caution.

"The worst thing, in my opinion, is to have a patient diagnosed as having cancer and told there's nothing that can be done," said Dr. Guy Newell, deputy director of the National Cancer Institute.

Newell and Dr. Benjamin Byrd, president of the American Cancer Society, stressed progress has been made toward fighting cancer on many fronts, including the use of surgery, chemotherapy and drugs. The main aim at this point, they said, is to lengthen survival and not necessarily to find a cure.

"I don't think there's ever going to be one cure because there's not one cause," Newell continued. "Five or seven years ago we didn't even talk about a cure. We talked about remission and survival curves. Now we get flat survival curves and that often means cure."

The two said 85 percent of all cancers are caused by the environment and 50 percent come from known causes, mainly tobacco. Of the remainder, there are indications that diets high in fat and cholesterol may cause some cancer just as they contribute to heart disease.

Newell and Byrd cautioned against raising hopes based on controlled experiments where limited success is reached in closely monitored environments.

"The anxiety that come up in a cancer patient's family when something is going wrong somewhere and they're not a part of it is beyond belief," Byrd said. "One of the worst problems one has in dealing with cancer patients is false hope."

EDITORS NOTE: The Las Vegas Voice will publish your opinion on any subject - praise - complaints - questions - or answers. We do reserve the right to edit, and your letter must be signed with a valid address and phone number for verification prior to publication. We want your letters! At your written request your name can be withheld.

I happen to read your request for letters to the editor. I am not a professional writer, but I have a thought that I would like to share with my people. That thought is of our basic instinct to SURVIVE.

Being black makes me a professional in survival. Only a black man or woman knows what it is to live by double standards. Doing the same work as the whites, but receiving less. Or even worse, doing the same work, being better educated, trained or experienced in our particular field then see your white counter-part get a promotion. This is the new "legal" double standard practice that has developed since we have asked for our rights.

I have been asked how do we make it on such low wages, well, I ain't going to let that secret out, and I pray that my other brothers don't either.

We have a built-in instinct to get by on what we can, but the time is short for this continued type of getting-by.

A. Jax

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