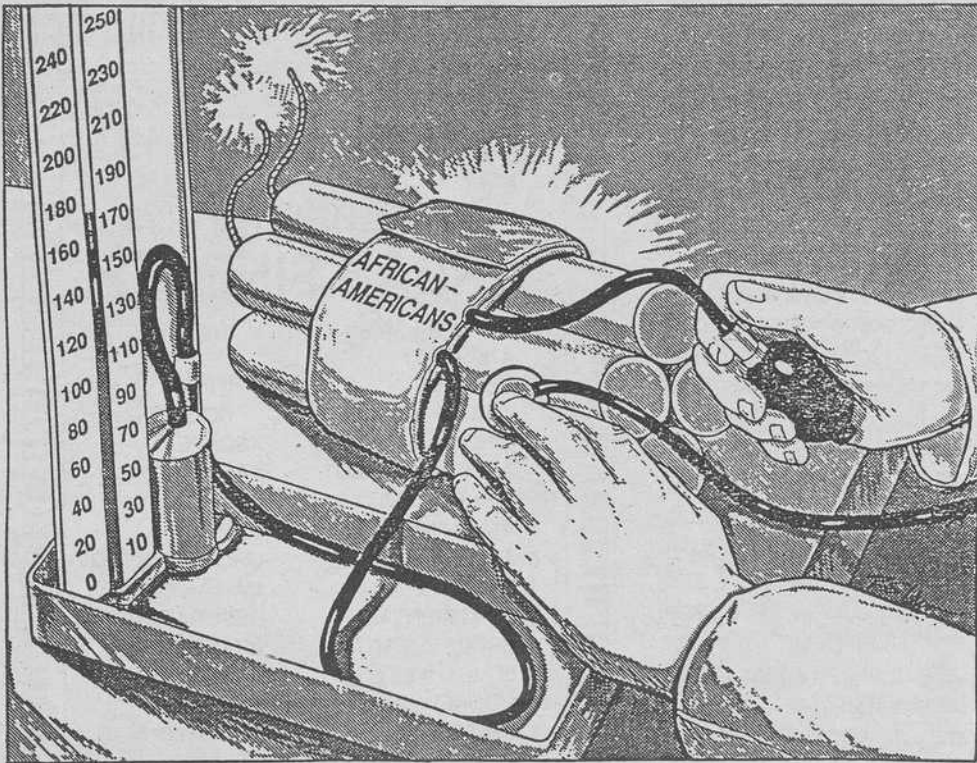


HEALTH

SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTH Winning The Fight Against Silent Killers



(NAPS)—They're quietly slinking across the country and they're out to kill. The silent killers currently stalking 60 million Americans are high blood pressure and diabetes. High blood pressure often sneaks up on people, causing no symptoms until a great deal of damage has been done. The end result of uncontrolled high blood pressure or diabetes can be heart attack or kidney failure.

While diabetes and high blood pressure can happen to anyone, African-Americans are especially at risk. High blood pressure strikes one of four African-Americans, compared with one of six whites, and African-Americans between ages 30 and 49 develop kidney failure related to high blood pressure 20 times more often than whites. Also, while African-Americans make up only 12 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 20 percent of deaths from diabetes.

Yes, there are two killers preying upon unsuspecting neighborhoods, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself. For starters, have your blood pressure checked regularly. If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure and need to take medicine, be sure to take it as directed by your doctor and report any side effects. Also, the following lifestyle changes can improve your health:

- Eat a balanced, low-fat diet
- Watch your weight
- Exercise regularly
- Keep salt intake down
- Don't smoke
- Limit alcohol consumption

• Try to reduce stress

To fight the outbreak of kidney disease due to high blood pressure and diabetes in the African-American community, the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) has teamed up with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As part of this joint effort, the NKF and NAACP have developed a brochure to educate the public about the dangers of high blood pressure and diabetes and how people can take control of their health if they have these diseases.

For a free copy of "Winning the Fight Against Silent Killers," send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Silent Killers," c/o the National Kidney Foundation, Inc., 30 E. 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016. The brochure is made possible through an educational grant from Pfizer Inc.

The Federal Government is also onto these killers and its National Institutes of Health plans to launch the African-American study of kidney disease and high blood pressure. African-Americans who are diagnosed with both high blood pressure and signs of kidney disease will participate in the study. The goal of the study is to find out whether a lower blood pressure level can preserve kidney function and whether certain types of drugs are more effective than others in slowing kidney disease in African-Americans. The drugs which the patients will be taking are Altace™, Norvasc®, and Toprol®.

Through the combined efforts of so many, these killers may soon be history!

HEALTH ALERT!

Get Your Child Vaccinated

(NAPS)—Is your child safe from dangerous disease? For proper protection, children should receive 80 percent of their vaccinations by their second birthday, the period during which they are most vulnerable to disease.

Childhood vaccines prevent nine infectious diseases: polio, measles, diphtheria, mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), rubella (German measles), tetanus, hepatitis-B and Hib (the most common cause of spinal meningitis). Between 11 and 15 vaccine doses are due by age two, requiring about five visits to a health care provider.

The Childhood Immunization Initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) came about because only two-thirds of American children under age two receive all the immunization they need—and, in some inner city areas, vaccination rates for preschool children are much lower.

The Childhood Immunization Initiative aims, by 1996, to increase vaccination levels for two-year-olds to at least 90 percent for the initial and most critical doses; and to reduce most diseases preventable by vaccination down to zero. By 2000, the Initiative aims to have in place a system that will ensure at least 90 percent of all two-year-olds receive the full series of vaccines.

"Our Childhood Immunization Initiative recognizes the importance of reaching out actively to parents to make sure they know when and how to immunize their children," says HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala. "Outreach efforts to health care providers are being increased to encourage



Immunize on time. Your baby's counting on you.

them to take advantage of all opportunities to vaccinate infants."

What can you do to protect your baby's health? Ask your health care provider to check your baby's immunization status whenever you visit, even if it's for another purpose, such as a cold or a broken arm.

Toll-free telephone numbers have been established by HHS' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to refer parents with no health care providers to local services to immunize their children. To obtain information on immunization services in your community, call 1-800-232-2522 or 1-800-232-0233 (Spanish).

HEALTH BRIEFS

NEW STUDY TO INVESTIGATE HOW FEMALE HORMONES AFFECT BREAST CANCER

HOUSTON—In a newly funded study of breast cancer, scientist are investigating how hormones can protect against the No. 1 cancer among North American women.

"We already know that women who have their first full-term pregnancies before age 20 achieve a 50 percent reduction in their risk of breast cancer," said Dr. Daniel Medina, a cell biologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, "and we know that women who wait until after age 30 to have their first full-term pregnancies increase their risk of developing breast cancer."

In a five-year study funded

by the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health, Medina and other researchers will attempt to learn how female hormones affect breast cancer.

Breast undergo many changes during pregnancy, altering the cellular nature of the breast in the process.

"If we can learn the mechanisms of these changes and how they can confer protection from breast cancer," he said, "we may be able to devise a way to achieve those same results by other ways."

Medina said a form of three-dimensional imaging called confocal microscopy will help scientists follow normal and cancer cells to learn how they respond to hormonal changes and to locate cancer-resistance

cells.

★★★★★

IF YOU GET THE FLU...

HOUSTON—If you're one of those folks who didn't get a flu shot and you catch the flu, here are some tips for riding it out.

Dr. W. Paul Glezen, epidemiologist at the Influenza Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston recommends:

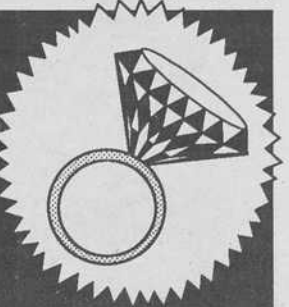
*Taking over-the-counter pain relievers and fever reducers. Adults can use aspirin or aspirin substitutes; children can take acetaminophen.

*Getting plenty of bed rest.

*Drinking plenty of fluids.

If you have influenza A, two prescription drugs, Amantadine and Rimantadine, can help, Glezen said. If taken within 48 (See Health Briefs, Page 18)

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