

## HEALTH

**Children and bronchitis**

HOUSTON — If you suspect your child has bronchitis, then listen for the cough.

"Coughing is the hallmark of bronchitis," said Dr. Julie Katkin, a pediatric pulmonologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "The chances are that, if your children have had colds or the flu and are coughing regularly, they have bronchitis."

Bronchitis, an inflammation of airways known as bronchi, is usually caused by infections from rhinoviruses, adenoviruses, influenza viruses or other strains. It produces phlegm and coughing, usually takes two to three weeks to run its course and is rarely dangerous.

"Bronchitis is often confused with bronchiolitis, another kind of viral infection that usually affects young children,"

Katkin said. "In bronchiolitis, the smaller airways become inflamed, causing a wheezing sound and difficulty breathing. Any child having difficulty breathing should be seen by a

physician."

Bronchitis may occasionally require antibiotic therapy, although Katkin says simple measures should be taken before taking antibiotics. These include:

\*Getting plenty of rest

\*Drinking lots of fluids

\*Using a humidifier, particularly in the winter months when the air is drier.

\*Avoiding cigarette smoke or other inhaled irritants such as strong cleaning fluids or pet hair.

Children at increased risk for bronchitis include the very young, those with asthma, cystic fibrosis, impaired immune systems, or those exposed to cigarette smoke regularly.

Katkin says that repeated episodes of bronchitis may be a sign of undiagnosed asthma or allergies.

For those with asthma, it's important to see a physician for proper treatment.

"Parents, in general, should not overly worry about

bronchitis," Katkin said. "Its very common. However, if it persists for more than two or three weeks, or if there are more than four episodes in a year, they should see a doctor."

**Healthwire News Briefs****STRUCTURE OF VEINS IN AFRICAN AMERICANS DIFFERENT THAN WHITES**

Groundbreaking research, conducted by Dr. Randall Tackett, Head of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of Georgia, has shown that the veins of African Americans are less flexible and more difficult to dilate than those of whites, which may explain the disproportionate numbers of African Americans with heart disease and hypertension. It seems that the key difference lies in the endothelia, the flat cells that line the veins and arteries. Reasons for the difference are not completely clear, but genetic and environmental factors are considered important. Some of Dr. Tackett's findings, however, correlate with earlier work (by Dr. Norman Anderson at Duke University) showing that African Americans respond differently to the chemicals and hormones the body produces during stress (in terms of circulation, etc.), points out Dr. Elijah Saunders, Co-Founder of the International Society of Hypertension in Blacks.

The most immediate implications from the study, however, will be in the area of hypertension. Dr. Tackett explains, "a vessel that is less elastic, less flexible, will lead to an elevation in blood pressure."

**AIDS exhibit to open at Lied Discovery Children's Museum**

A ground-breaking museum exhibition on the science of HIV and AIDS will be on display through April 28 at the Lied Discovery Children's Museum. "What About AIDS?" is designed to extend the reach of AIDS

education to a wide audience, promoting the idea that "it's not who you are, it's what you do." Developed by a national consortium of nine museums, medical professionals, and community and religious leaders, the exhibit explores the science behind the disease, including how the virus works. Also featured are stories of children and adults affected by HIV and AIDS, and a direct phone line to the National AIDS Hotline.

The detective work that led to an understanding of AIDS in the 1980s, and the current search for a cure, are explored through an interactive computer program, audio interviews with researchers, and several simple hands-on devices. Exhibit panels are grouped to create private areas for viewing sensitive material on prevention, including a bilingual (Spanish and English) interactive video in

which Edward James Olmos talks to teenagers about AIDS. Additional interactive materials explain what behaviors and choices are risky.

Throughout the run of the exhibition, the museum will present programs, events and activities designed to further educate visitors about different aspects of the disease and its impact on young people. Guest speakers and panelists from various community organizations will participate in the presentations.

"What About AIDS?" is sponsored locally by the Clark County Coalition of HIV/AIDS Service Providers, Tom Saitta's Las Vegas Chrysler-Plymouth and Tom Saitta's Truck Center & Cars Too!

Lied Discovery Children's Museum is located at 833 Las Vegas Boulevard North. Call 382-3445 for more information.

**Sunrise Hospital seminar directs attention to vision loss and treatments available**

Clouded or blurry vision experienced by men and women over the age of 50, may be symptoms of macular degeneration, a degenerative eye condition.

Macular degeneration is the damage or breakdown of the eye's macula, a small area at the back of the eye that allows people to see fine details clearly. Macular degeneration makes near-sighted activities — such as threading a needle, balancing a checkbook, or reading — extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Although vision loss can occur in young adults, macular degeneration most often is related to aging. Many older people develop this vision problem as part of the body's natural aging process.

To learn more about this

condition, a free seminar and panel discussion will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, February 20, in the Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center Auditorium, 3186 S. Maryland Parkway.

The panel of specialists includes Drs. Roger M. Simon, R. Jeffrey Parker, Kwang J. Lee, and Thomas G. Chu. All are retinal specialists with Retina Consultants of Nevada, the only retinal specialty group in the state.

Discussion topics will include the importance of early identification of symptoms and the use of laser surgery and other available treatments.

For additional information and reservations, please call the Sunrise Volunteer Office at 731-8188. The office is open Monday through Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

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