

## HEALTH

# Early detection men's best bet in beating prostate cancer

By Marilyn Johnson Kondwani  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

While the exact cause of prostate cancer is unknown, many risk factors such as a man's age, race and family history play a major role in determining whether he will develop the disease.

However, there is good news for men living with prostate cancer. Numerous research studies and clinical trials are being conducted nationally and internationally to investigate the cause, treatment and prevention of not only prostate cancer, but lung and colon/rectal cancers too.

"We don't have enough information about the benefits of preventative screening for prostate cancer among men of African heritage," explained Dr. Clareann Bunker, assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Public Health and principal investigator on a collaborative study between the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute and the Tobago Health Care System.

Bunker, along with Dr. Lewis Kuller,

chairman of The University of Pittsburgh's Department of Epidemiology, and Dr. Allen Patrick, consulting physician for the Tobago Health Care System, recently began a collaborative study when health care officials in Tobago expressed concern over a high incidence of elevated prostate specific antigen (PSA) level found in males on the island.

Following the digital rectal examination of the prostate gland, the PSA test is one of the most accurate screening tests to indicate the presence of prostate cancer.

The goal of the research is to study 3,000 black men over a period of at least 10 years to determine if early screening results in an increased life span and improved quality of life.

"The study provides important information that will help us to learn why prostate cancer has become so prevalent in men of African descent and how we can help save lives," Bunker said.

At the University of Michigan, researcher Dr. David Schottenfeld has been studying the

lifestyle, family history, and related information of 733 African-American men since 1995.

Working with urologists in Flint, to study men who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, the goal of Dr. Schottenfeld's research has been to distinguish who gets the disease from those who don't.

To date, results indicate that prostate cancer may be affected by a person's genetic history in both their paternal and maternal lines. The level of circulating male hormones and nutritional factors also play an important role in who will get the disease.

"There appears to be a relationship between higher levels of testosterone and increased incidence of prostate cancer among African-American males," Schottenfeld said.

"We think prostate cancer may be related to excess fat in the diet, as well as a significant relationship of active calcium and vitamin D in the tissue of the gland. Vitamin D acts like a hormone to benefit and protect the prostate gland. Adding skim milk fortified with vitamin

D to the diet and taking multivitamins on a regular basis may help prevent prostate cancer," he added.

Dr. Joel Weissfeld, principal investigator for the University of Pittsburgh Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian Cancer Research Project (PLCO), is conducting a study in which more than 12,000 men and women, ages 55 to 74, have been screened in randomized clinical trials.

In this program, participants complete an extensive family history questionnaire and then receive usual cancer prevention education or complete preventive screening. The program may include a combination of: Digital Rectal Exam and PSA blood test for men, CA 125 — a screening test for cancer in women — chest X-ray, ultrasound, a variety of other related cancer screening prevention tests, and the newest forms of cancer treatments.

The PLCO, study funded by the National Institutes of Cancer, has been ongoing since (See Prostate, Page 14)

## Facial bumps, acne treatable problems

By Rebecca J. Al-Nakhli  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Dear Rebecca: My husband gets unsightly bumps on his face around his cheeks where he shaves. Each of these bumps has a hair in it. I thought it was something men got shaving, but I also have the same bumps on my legs and underarms. I started having the problem after I got electrolysis treatments on my face. These bumps leave awful scars after they heal. Please tell us what can we do.

Patty and John

Dear Patty and John: Thank you for your letter. Ingrown hairs form after hair has been cut or removed under the surface of the skin. As the hair grows, it turns or curls within the follicle and fails to exit it to the surface of the skin. The result is an unsightly ingrown hair bump. To rectify this problem several new steps must be added to your skin care program.

Patty, let me deal with your situation first. If the skin to be shaved, waxed or treated by an electrologist is dry and callused, the hair is blocked from exiting the follicle. In other words, the hole where the hair should normally exit is covered by dead skin, excess sebum or some foreign body.

Use a loofah sponge on your legs and under your arms to remove this dead-skin build-up before shaving the area. Immediately apply rich creams to lubricate your skin. If you are using a depilatory cream, do not include this

step because the cream will remove and exfoliate excess dead skin. Never use any abrasive material on the skin before using a depilatory cream because this will cause irritation.

Your face also needs special attention to prepare it for your choice of hair removal. Home facials and moisturizing the face will exfoliate or remove the dead skin.

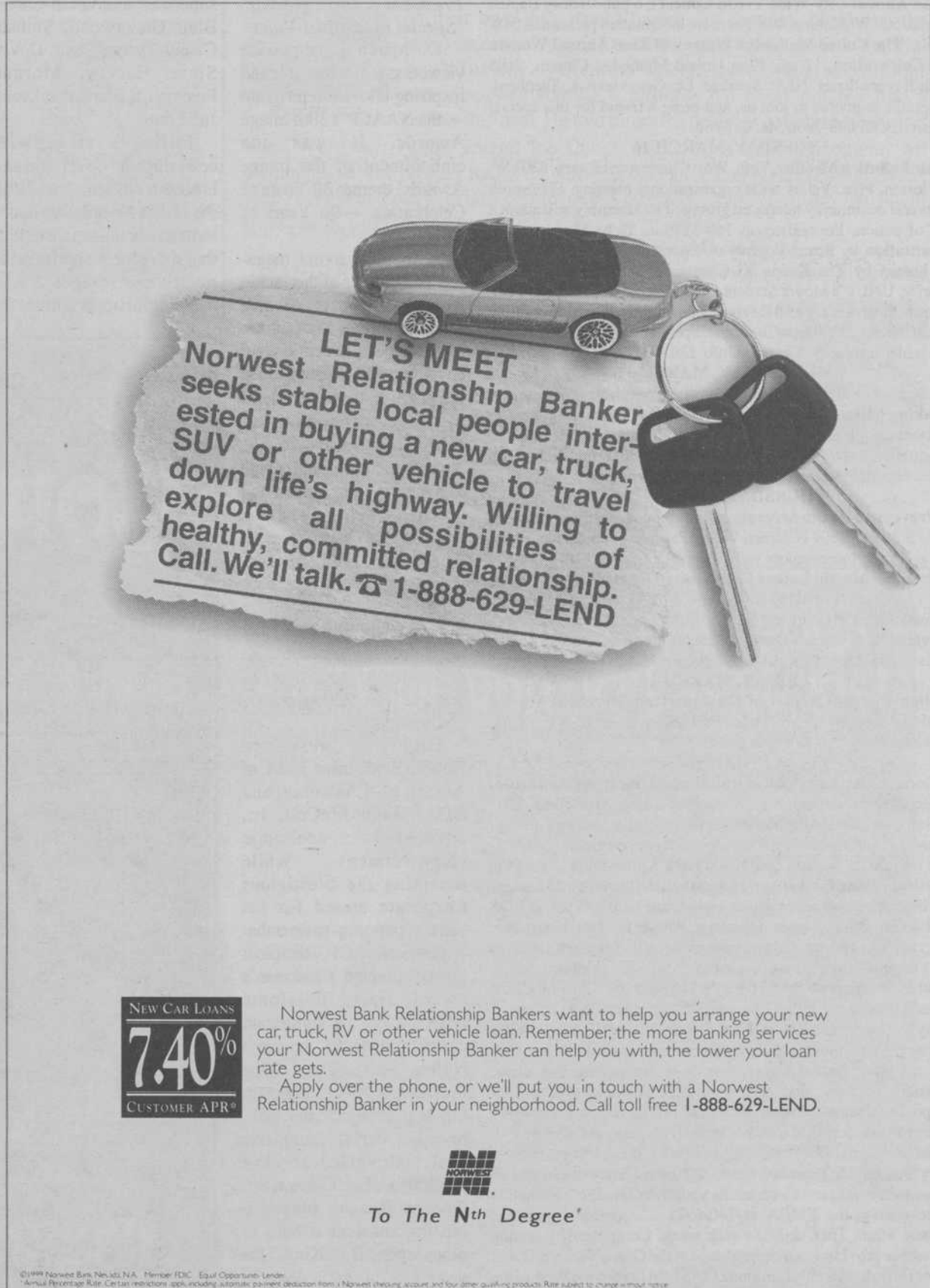
Adding these steps to your husband's routine will also help solve his ingrown hair problem. Also, if his hair is curly, he should shave with a very sharp razor on a daily basis. He should condition his skin daily and use an aftershave without alcohol or perfume because this will burn his skin. This slight burning of the skin is enough to toughen it and cause a blockage of the hair follicle, which in turn causes ingrown hairs.

Dear Rebecca: I love your column, and thank you for answering questions that are directed toward African-American skin problems. I have never read any articles that focus directly on us. My question deals with acne. What is acne and does it ever stop on its own? I am 35-years-old and when it is time for my menstrual cycle, my whole face breaks out. The rest of the month I only have acne. Help.

A. Perry

Dear A. Perry: Acne is a disorder of the skin caused by inflammation of the glands

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