

Puzzle

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Skeptics, though, point out there is no evidence of a direct link.

"It could also be that a third factor, such as intelligence, leads to greater levels of education and independently to lower risk of dementia," writes Margaret Gatz, a psychology professor at the University of Southern California. Scottish researchers, for instance, found those with higher IQ scores at age 11 went on to have lower rates of dementia decades later. Gatz is not opposed to mental exercise — if undertaken



Keep your brain healthy by completing puzzles such as Sudoku.

to improve specific daily functioning or simply for pleasure — but she worries that the use-it-or-lose-it mantra will lead to false hope and, worse, to Alzheimer's victims being blamed for their disease, just as heavy smokers are for lung cancer.

Instead, Gatz agrees with researchers who emphasize the other components of a healthy brain — sound nutrition, sufficient sleep, stress management,

treatment of depression and anxiety, physical exercise and avoiding head trauma by, for instance, wearing a helmet while bicycling.

"I do work crossword puzzles," she adds in an e-mail, "because I find it relaxing and because it is an activity that my spouse and I do together."

But if the relationship between intellectual stagnation and Alzheimer's is open to interpretation, there is still plenty of people who figure it can't hurt to beef up their mental exercise, just to be on the safe side.

Tan is one of them. "People in their 40s should start thinking about this," he says. "As with cancer and heart disease, the earlier you start taking preventive steps, the better. Since they've found that people with higher levels of education are at lower risks of developing problems, you could argue that, even in your teens or 20s, you could start building brain reserves — in addition to getting a good education."

Dr. Ross Katzman, an Orlando, Fla., dentist, would tend to agree. Each day, Katzman, 51, works the Sudoku puzzle published in the newspaper — not that he doesn't get plenty of mental stimulation on the job.

"I don't know that it's going to help keep things sharp. I really just do it for pleasure," he says. "But it doesn't hurt, and maybe it'll be a warning sign when I can no longer solve the puzzle." ❖

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL OF THE MONTEREY PENINSULA

The changing face of diabetes

Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula offers support, education, and treatment programs

Some 18 million people in this country have diabetes, and an estimated 9 million of them don't even know it. And both of those numbers are expected to keep growing.

The reasons are many and varied. Baby boomers are aging. In fact, the first wave of boomers — the 77 million people born from 1946-1964 — turned 60 on January 1 of this year. Many are overweight, stressed out, and more likely to forego exercise because of their busy schedules.

Not surprisingly, they represent a significant portion of the 41 million Americans who now have a condition called "pre-diabetes." It's a condition where the blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not yet within the range of a diabetes diagnosis. If the condition is properly managed, diabetes can be avoided. If not, it's anybody's guess as to what could happen to the diabetes statistics in our country.

Will we have an epidemic? Or will we be able to educate enough people early enough — in the pre-diabetes stage — to avoid such a fate?

"The good news about pre-diabetes is that it is reversible," says Barbara Quinn, clinical dietitian and certified diabetes educator for Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. "Lower your fat intake and your weight, increase your fiber, increase your activity or exercise, and you can lower your chances for developing diabetes and heart disease."

Those who take steps now can also avoid potential damage to their nerves,

eyes, kidneys, and other organs, all of which are risks for those who develop diabetes.

Specifically, studies from the National Institutes of Health have shown that people with pre-diabetes tend to eventually develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years unless they lose 5 percent to 7 percent of their body weight. The key is to make and maintain modest changes in diet and level of physical activity.

In two landmark studies — a Finnish study in 2001 and a Diabetes Prevention Program study in 2002 — it was determined that type 2 diabetes could be delayed or prevented with modest changes in weight, diet, and activity. Still, it's easier said than done.

While the U.S. diabetes system is not structured to provide or reimburse for regular lifestyle counseling, better strategies are needed to help people lose weight, keep the weight off, and exercise more often.

Community Hospital has created a quarterly class — Pre Diabetes: Stop Diabetes Before It Starts — for patients classified as pre-diabetic (a fasting blood glucose level of 100-125 or higher). The four sessions focus on understanding diabetes and pre-diabetes, the impact of either on our lives, and effective strategies for preventing or delaying the onset of type 2 diabetes. The fee for the class is \$60.

"Weight is the symptom we usually see, but there's more," says Michelle Barth, clinical dietitian and certified diabetes educator for Community Hospital. "The overweight person who doesn't exercise, eats poorly, drinks, and smokes is adding up the risk factors."

"In our classes, we talk about moderate exercise. We talk about portion controlling foods — we talk about protein control, increasing fiber, decreasing fat, and savoring our food."

Community Hospital also offers the following diabetes services:

• **Diabetes Basics Program** — provides education in diabetes self-management for individuals and families who live with the condition. Classes and appointments are scheduled based on individual needs. A doctor's referral is necessary.

• **The FACTS about Diabetes** — One-day seminar emphasizes essential diabetes self-management.

• **Topics in Diabetes** — Features expert speakers and group discussion to increase knowledge of diabetes and offer support. Family members and support persons are welcome.

• **Pre-Diabetes: Carbohydrate Control and Blood Sugar Management** — Designed for those who have pre-diabetes (not for those with diabetes). Participants learn how to correctly test their blood sugar and count carbohydrates to help them make healthful nutrition and exercise choices.

• **Diabetes Support Group** — Interactive group meetings encourage anyone with type 1 or type 2 diabetes to share his or her experiences and concerns about managing diabetes.

• **Insulin Pump Program** — Available for people with type 1 or type 2 diabetes who are interested in using an insulin pump. A doctor's referral is necessary.

• **Sweet Success** — California Diabetes and Pregnancy Program offers education for pregnant or gestational women who have diabetes. A doctor's referral is necessary.

For more information about any of these programs, please call the Community Hospital Diabetes Program at 649-7220. ❖

MEN'S HEALTH

Understanding myths, facts may help men prevent hair loss

By Rob Kallick | Tribune Media Services

Hair loss and thinning hair can be a frustrating problem for a man. And the seemingly random nature as to who loses his hair and who doesn't only compounds the aggravation. According to Dr. Elliot Jacobs, author of "Mantalk" (MDPublish, \$16.95), typical baldness (androgenetic alopecia) occurs when the rate of hair being shed exceeds the rate of re-growth.

"Whether temporary or permanent, baldness cannot be cured," says Jacobs. "There are, however, treatments to promote hair growth or hide hair loss. And for some types of baldness, hair may resume growth without any form of treatment."

There are a number of myths as to what causes hair loss — wearing of hats or headgear, too frequent washing or cutting of hair, diet, smoking and nervous tension being just a few of the false reasons behind baldness.

"The predisposition to go bald is inherited from either the mother or father's side of the family and is caused by the hormone DHT," says Dr. Ken Washenik, the medical director at BOSLEY Medical Center in New York. "DHT is the chief bad actor that has been identified today that has minimized hair follicles. In men at risk, their hair is genetically programmed to thin as a result of the DHT enzyme that attacks areas of the scalp, resulting in hair thinning and loss."

According to Jacobs, while many of the myths as to what causes people to go bald are false, these myths do contain truths about what can affect the growth of your

hair. "Hair growth is related to your diet," says Jacobs. "Crash dieting may cause hair loss, as might a lack of protein or iron in your diet. Don't try to make up for a lack of nutrients with over-the-counter vitamin supplements though — they are often high in vitamin A, which often makes hair loss worse."

In addition, emotional or physical stress won't cause balding, but they can affect the strength of your hair.

"Also, protect your hair from harsh elements like wind, cold weather and sun," says Jacobs. "All of which can affect your hair."

While permanent hair loss is genetic and can't be prevented, there are two FDA-approved treatments that help slow down hair loss. The first, Minoxidil, is a topical medication that slows down or stops hair loss in some cases and helps re-grow hair on the vertex of the head in other cases. The other is Propecia, a tablet taken once a day under a doctor's prescription.

"According to the manufacturer, an estimated one million men in the United States take this medication daily," says Washenik. "According to recent studies, Propecia has been shown to help slow down the progressive thinning of hair in 90 percent of male users over five years."

Washenik adds that men who are already "shiny bald" are unlikely to have positive results because the hair follicles may not be salvageable.

"Men who have early thinning on the back or top of the head have a better chance of obtaining some benefit, but only for as long as they continue taking the medication."

In addition to these two non-surgical treatments, there is also hair restoration surgery as a viable option.

"Follicular-unit transportation is the gold standard and yields much more natural-looking hairlines than the transplants done years ago," says Washenik. "Multiple hair grafts imitate the way actual hair grows in nature." ❖



MEN'S HEALTH

Crunched for time

By Michael Granberry

Gym targets men who want a timed workout

Curves is a fitness program that beckons women by saying they can "change their lives, 30 minutes at a time." Curves has more than 9,000 outlets worldwide, and thousands of women swear by it.

But what about men? Guys, welcome to your own 30-minute workout. It's not affiliated with Curves, but it's catching on with men who have half an hour to work out — and no more.

Dave Juring is one of those men. He's an executive with a software company. Juring has lost 14 pounds by working out at Cuts Fitness for Men in Lewisville, Texas, part of a growing national chain.

"I love it," says Juring, 47. "It does a very effective job of burning fat and building muscle."

Tobi Fisk, 33, a personal trainer, owns the Cuts facility with his wife. He first went to a Cuts in 2004, during a fitness conference in San Diego.

"It gave me a phenomenal workout," says Fisk. "I could do in 30 minutes what I do with clients in an hour. The added benefit? It targets a group of men who are otherwise untargeted."

"A lot of guys don't know how to start and don't know where to start. This gives them an opportunity to get healthy in 30-minute segments each day."



Cuts Fitness for Men manager Bernard Nardizzi.

Bernard Nardizzi, 68, manages the Cuts facility. He describes the concept as "circuit training," which involves working out on machines that, collectively, address every muscle group in the body. There are 16 "stations" in all.

"When you complete the circuit," says Nardizzi, "you really have completed a total body workout. Every muscle group is exercised, and in addition, you've given yourself an elevated cardiovascular workout."

Men spend about 40 seconds at each of the 16 stations. They complete three circuits, allowing them to spread the workout over 30 minutes — but no more.



Rick Porter works out at Cuts Fitness for Men in Lewisville, Texas.

"So in 30 minutes you get the equivalent of a one- to two-hour workout with a personal trainer," says Nardizzi. "How often can anyone make a statement like that?"

Another benefit, Nardizzi says, is that "you don't have the distractions you do in a typical gym. It's exclusively men, so you don't have to worry about political correctness."

John Gennaro, the president and founder of Cuts, says his company began in 2003, "when I got tired of asking the question of why no one had created the men's version of Curves. Men have similar issues to deal with — lack of time, lack of comfort in traditional gyms, etc. — so I didn't get it."

Gennaro opened the first Cuts in Clark, N.J., "and quickly realized that men were just as passionate about the product as the women were. Time, comfort and effectiveness are what it's all about." He now has 85 franchises in 32 states and five countries.

Cuts relies almost exclusively on the concept of a targeted heart rate, based on age. A large wall chart guides individual clients to their targeted range, depending, of course, on age. Each man is given a heart monitor and instructed to use it every 10 minutes during the workout.

What men are not encouraged to do is to elevate their heart rates into what Nardizzi calls "the red zone."

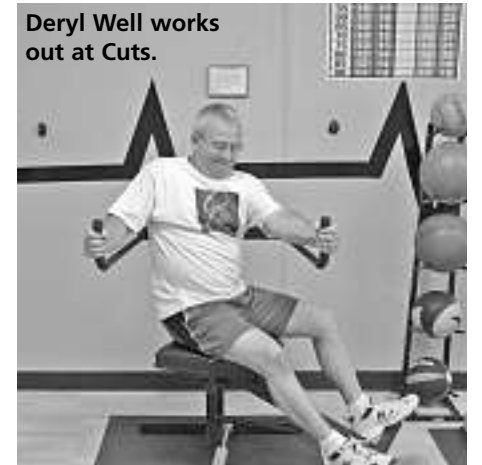
"A lot of men believe, wrongly, in the 'no-pain, no-gain' concept," he says. "But by keeping your heart rate in more of

a middle range, you do a better job of burning stored fat."

"You're not going to end up looking like Schwarzenegger by using this approach," says Nardizzi, "but you might end up looking like Bruce Lee. That's not such a bad look, is it?"

So is there anyone it's not right for?

For men who have gotten into shape by running — and lost large amounts of weight by running, and whose main desire is upper-body conditioning



Deryl Well works out at Cuts.

— Cuts may prove frustrating, at least initially.

Because such men have already attained heightened cardiovascular conditioning, it may take longer to reach an elevated heart rate, putting them in a different category than the "de-conditioned" men who crave Cuts immediately. ❖