



July 2, 2008

Quick takes on health: Autism, screening for prostate cancer

Autism resource center opens

The Rochester Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders is a new resource for families with children who have autism. It is a central place where families can find information on symptoms, the latest research, possible therapies and reputable community resources that provide them. "Prior to this, a family facing an autism diagnosis inevitably began a scavenger hunt for the resources and answers they needed," said Caroline I. Magyar, an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Rochester who directs the new center. "Schools and community groups also craved support and education but had trouble finding it. Now, we're fortunate to act as an information clearinghouse; these families and groups tap our expertise, and we help outfit them with information on the best services and tools."

The center is funded by the state's Department of Education and is coordinated by the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities Regional Center at State University of New York at Albany.

For more information, call (585) 273-1613 or go to www.urmc.edu/childrens-hospital/autism.

Learn about mental illness

An upcoming panel presentation will focus on schizophrenia, treatment and recovery.

The panel will feature Dr. Laurence Guttmacher, clinical director of the Rochester Psychiatric Center, as well as a parent and a person with schizophrenia who are members of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. It will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. July 15 at the Rochester Psychiatric Center, 1111 Elmwood Ave., in the library of the Rehabilitation Building.

The workshop is free. For more information, call (585) 423-1593.

Free health screenings at games

Urology Associates of Rochester will offer free prostate cancer and andropause screenings during two upcoming Rochester Red Wings games. The screenings will be done beginning an hour before game time until the seventh inning stretch on July 18 and Aug. 30 in the Frontier Field concourse.

The screenings involve a simple blood draw that will be used to check the PSA of men 50 and older and to screen for andropause in any male experiencing fatigue, decreased energy, increased irritability or reduced libido. The results will be sent to the person's primary care physician.

For more information, call Urology Associates at (888) 827-6243.

Synthetic grass concern

Concerns continue about the risks of lead exposure from artificial turf, The Associated Press reports.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, while conceding that potential risks aren't yet

understood, issued a health advisory in June to minimize exposure in children age 6 and younger. The concern is what's in the dust from worn artificial turf. Testing by New Jersey public health officials found high lead levels in nylon and nylon-blend fields after extensive wear. The lead could be absorbed by people playing on the fields, but the state epidemiologist said lead levels weren't high enough to cause poisoning.

A California watchdog group has since cautioned consumers more broadly. Lab tests found excessive lead in indoor/outdoor carpeting, artificial lawns and playground grass made with nylon and polyethylene, the Center for Environmental Health said. The group plans to sue turf manufacturers and retailers unless they pull the products. Meanwhile, testing for turf manufacturers hasn't found problems. AstroTurf said additional tests by New Jersey officials confirmed the safety of synthetic turf fields.

This column compiled from staff and wire reports.
