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HEALTH
QUESTION
OF THE MONTH

Doctors should advise overweight mothers considering another pregnancy to take off extra weight first, because they are at greater risk of having overly large babies, according to a Saint Louis University study. An overly large baby might create a more difficult birth. This does NOT mean a mother should diet DURING pregnancy (see your doctor for all pregnancy questions).

Have you tried to lose weight between pregnancies? If so, what's a secret or two?

Please answer online at:
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Beyond sickness

Hospitals working to keep families healthy By Sandy Bennett

It used to be that people went to the hospital when they were sick. Now, they also go when they are well. While hospitals are still in the business of treating illnesses and mending the injured, more and more, emphasis is being placed on prevention and healthy living.

"Ten years ago, hospitals were more about testing, diagnosis and treatment," says Dr. Jolanta Lukawski, medical director of the Women's Wellness Center at Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach. "Now we're seeing a lot more focus on the outpatient, on prevention, on screening modality."

Hospitals, for example, are investing in breast care centers with digital mammography and ultrasound for screening and early detection of disease. Mobile medical units, such as CHOC's Breathmobile, which provides asthma care to preschool and elementary schoolchildren at 20 Orange County sites each month, have helped to improve children's lives while making more effective use of emergency room resources. And wellness centers and pro-

grams are becoming more commonplace. In fact, some of today's offerings may come as a surprise.

✓ St. Joseph Hospital in Orange opened its Wellness Center in May 2003. Among the services available to hospital patients and community members are yoga classes, Swedish massage, hot stone therapy, aromatherapy and foot scrubs. Such treatments are known to reduce stress and aid the healing process.

✓ Saddleback Memorial Medical Center in Laguna Hills offers an array of fitness-related programs as part of its wellness offerings. Its Fitness First program, for example, provides personalized exercise programs, strength training and cardiovascular/exercise equipment – without the lines or crowds often found at the gym.

✓ The Sue and Bill Gross Women's Wellness Center, which opened last year at Hoag Hospital, offers a place for patients to come and receive information on how to be

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SMOKE-FREE ADVOCACY

The American Lung Association's advocacy efforts have fueled the fight against Big Tobacco and the struggle to maintain healthy air quality standards. Without the support of an informed and concerned public, these efforts would be lost. We value the input of local advocates who know the importance of clean air for their families.

A growing number of states are taking strong action to protect their citizens by making almost all public places and workplaces smoke free and raising tobacco taxes, according to a report released recently by the American Lung Association.

In its annual update, "State Legislated Actions on Tobacco Issues, or SLATI (published since 1988), the Lung Association analyzes state laws enacted in 2005 on smoke-free air, youth access, tobacco taxes and tobacco prevention spending among other issues. The report is the only resource of its kind in tobacco control today summarizing state tobacco control laws on an annual basis.

"Earlier this year, we issued our American Lung Association Smoke Free Air 2010 Challenge, urging all states to adopt strong smoke-free air laws. SLATI 2005 shows a trend toward more states protecting their citizens from secondhand smoke. We challenge policymakers in every state to do the same," said John L. Kirkwood, president and CEO of the

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healthy, and stay healthy. A whole body approach addresses areas such as diet, exercise and alternative remedies, including acupuncture, supplements and relaxation techniques.

✓ Hospitals are also offering health risk assessments, which identify your specific risks for certain diseases and conditions and provides recommendations for your specific needs. St. Joseph offers a free, online checkup program. The information is reviewed and evaluated by a hospital clinician. Hoag Hospital also offers a detailed health history assessment. There is a charge for this service, which is a part of a comprehensive package.

Such trends can be attributed to a number of factors. Insurance companies have reduced benefits for in-patient hospital stays.

Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, arthritis and diabetes that may be preventable through diet, exercise and lifestyle, are on the rise. And consumers are taking a more active role in their health care.

"People are far more educated and far more interested (in their health) than before," says Cathy Semar, director of marketing and public relations at St. Joseph Hospital. The Internet allows for access to information, and extensive health campaigns have brought awareness to an array of conditions.

The level of public interest can be seen through a multiple of workshops, ranging from



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baby basics to diabetes management that are offered throughout the county. While programs of this type have been offered for years, the list of topics has grown substantially. Among many workshops offered at St. Joseph each month are Mommy & Baby Yoga, Toddler Topics and Breastfeeding and the Working Mother. Earlier this year, St. Joseph started a new program, called An Evening Out, where a variety of information is packaged together. Its most recent one focused on nutrition. In addition to a panel of experts, the program included vendors in the community. Restaurants provided heart-healthy snacks and deserts, and for some fun, Nordstrom did makeovers. Registration for this event continues to reach capacity, which currently is 200.

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American Lung Association.

"We also are encouraged that more states are raising tobacco taxes, which makes cigarettes more costly. Higher cigarette prices deter children and youth from starting to smoke and help motivate adult smokers to quit," he said. Find out more about California's proposed tax increase on cigarettes, Proposition 86, on yesprop86.com. By increasing taxes on cigarettes, you can help California become a safer place for your family.

You can also make a difference by making your voice heard as a member of the online Advocacy Network. As a member, you will receive "calls for action" that allow you to write elected officials about specific legislation through email. It is fast, easy, and can help make a positive impact for clean air, tobacco prevention, asthma, and other lung health issues. Information: californialung.org.

For more information about advocacy and lung health, please contact the American Lung Association at 800.LUNG.USA or reach our local office at 714.835.5864.



**Access the series online at
ocfamily.com.**

**Also, use our website's main page to
access our previous editorial initiatives,
All About Breastfeeding & Defy Diabetes.**

"We wanted to offer women a program where they could come in with their friends after work, sit down and relax and hear about many topics that affect their health, not just one topic," says Semar.

Another big hit in the community is UCI Medical Center's "Taking Charge of Your Health Care." More than 1,400 seniors turned out for the center's seventh annual event held at the Crystal Cathedral in May. The free conference, aimed at providing seniors the information they need to live strong, active and independent lives, featured breakfast and lunch, several health-related topics, health screenings and more.

This month, on Oct. 13, UCI Medical Center and the Crystal Cathedral will present "A Day of Women's Health." The event is free but registration is required. Visit ucihealth.com/womenevents or call 714.456.3770

The benefits of workshops and other wellness-related programs, says Hoag's Lukawski, "Community members are getting a better quality of life; they're living longer and healthier. That's the goal." ☺

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