

Meeting: No topics are off limits

■ Continued from 1D

"Dr. Moss will answer questions from A to Z and the answers are not sugar-coated. He will talk about anything on your mind. Nothing is too frivolous. If it is bothering you, then it is important. He says, 'That is why we are here,'" said Braidwood.

In a word, Moss is honest with the men and their wives.

For instance, Bill Braidwood said he found out even though the prostate had been removed the cancer can return. Eve Braidwood wanted to know more about her husband's incontinence and why it was not improving.

Alex Harris, 76, wanted to know about the hot flashes connected with medicine he takes.

The things that worries men the most? Erectile dysfunction, urinary incontinence or loss of control of the bladder, said Moss.

It is helpful, too, that when they discuss medicinal side effects, another patient might say, "It happens to me, too."

"And they realize they are not the only one," said Moss.

"Many times patients struggle with emotional and self-esteem issues. When they get together ... and there are instant bondings. People are able to talk about their sexual impotency fears and other concerns. ... There is so much information on the Internet and many are Internet savvy, so it can be overwhelming. They don't know where to start. Generally the group will rally around," said Moss.

Moss hopes candid discussions break barriers that will relieve patients' anxiety.

Topics discussed by various speakers range from treatments to food supplements. There might be a talk on synthetic prostate penile prosthesis and the acceptability of new models; an explanation of how the penile pump chamber to simulate erection works; and drugs that would help erectile dysfunction such as Viagra, Cialis and Levitra.

At the November session, registered pharmacist Marcus W. Elrod of ProEtic Pharmaceuticals, Greenville, S.C., conducted the program.

He discussed over-the-counter supplements and the latest information on some research about supplements and prostate cancer, and supplements now available through prescription.

"Many patients with prostate illness are currently taking over-the-counter supplements containing saw palmetto, celenium, Vitamin E, folic acid, B vitamins, lycopene and zinc to both help with difficulty in urination as well as for support of prostate health," said Elrod.

Also available today are two new prescription supplements, Udamin and Udamin SP. They contain these ingredients and are under FDA guidelines for content and potency.

And for the future, information is being gathered on celenium and Vitamin E on prostate cancer through a SELECT TRIAL underway in more than 400 sites in the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada, said Elrod. It is looking at 32,000 male participants to study the protective effect celenium and Vitamin E on prostate cancer.

Already the study brings information, said Elrod. According to U.S. Pharmacists (magazine) 2004: "data garnered from SELECT may help future generations of men avoid prostate cancer."

Besides hearing information, LaWayne Horton, 69, of Many, who elected radiation over surgery, just likes the camaraderie of the gatherings.

"You are meeting with people who had the same thing," Horton said.

"The meetings are very good and informative and you realize you are not the only one who had the cancer," said Horton's wife, Joan Horton.

An important part of the gathering is dinner that everyone looks forward to, said Mary M. Gilley, support group coordinator.



Shane Bevel/The Times
Bill Braidwood (left) talks with another prostate cancer survivor at the November Man to Man meeting.

Dr. Moss' Prostate Salad

This simple-to-prepare and popular dish is served at all local Man to Man meetings. It is filled with fruits and vegetables that are full of antioxidants and fiber, all of which are beneficial to health. Here are the ingredients:

Spinach. Flavonoids that prevent damage from free radicals.

Mandarin orange. Vitamin C and fiber.

Blueberries. Helps increase tone/strength of veins and improves vascular system.

Raspberries. Antioxidants that limit the damage free radicals can do to healthy cells.

Soynuts: Isoflavonoid genistein may protect against cancer cells.

Flaxseed meal: Mucilages that regulate colon function, reduce cholesterol and protect against cancer.

Sun-dried tomatoes: Lycopene, a carotenoid that is strongly suspected to prevent and slow growth of cancer cells; source of vitamin "C."

Walnuts: Omega 6 fatty acids, the plant version of the type of fat that prevents heart disease and they have an antifungal effect.

Broccoli: Vitamin C and A, potassium and fiber and its antioxidants are associated with lower risk of heart disease.

Extra virgin olive oil: Polyunsaturated fatty acids that reduce build up in arteries by reducing lipids and has been beneficial in helping reduce blood sugar.

Raspberry vinaigrette: Dressing with very little sodium and very little saturated fat.

Source: Dr. James L. Moss



Shane Bevel/The Times
Dr. James L. Moss makes prostate salad for every Man to Man meeting.

"At the first meeting, we had punch and cookies and then the meeting grew as the fog grew," said Gilley.

But Gilley and other staffers seem to enjoy providing the meal that they cook most of the time. Occasionally, the meals are catered.

The menu includes salads, appetizer, main course and desserts. The November meeting theme was Thanksgiving and was provided by Luby's, compliments of a drug company.

"Last month, we had a fall theme. Christmas is really a pretty meeting and this year we will have a special singer who is a prostate survivor," said Gilley.

There has also been a Mexican fiesta and Mardi Gras celebration.

And always, they serve Dr. Moss' Prostate Salad, which includes such foods as blueberries, soynuts, and sun-dried tomatoes. "We had a nutritionist go over it and everything is excellent for the prostate. It is beautiful. ... We serve it at every one of the meals," said Gilley.

Moss feels nutrition is important. "The salad is made up of natural foods. ... We eat the salad at my house twice a week," said Moss.

He also recommends the Mediterranean diet, eaten by people in the Mediterranean area where prostate cancer is rare. "They eat olive oil, fiber, pasta, grain, fruits, vegetables and nuts. Spinach is loaded with healthy stuff. At my house, we eat spinach on our sandwiches instead of lettuce."

Whatever they serve, Bill Braidwood is impressed and humbled by the contribution of the staff who prepare the meals.

"They cook in the break room with no ovens or stove, just a crockpot and hot plate. ... They start early in the morning," Bill said.

The American Cancer Society's Lisa Clark says the dinner is such a special bonus.

"They could have had cookies and punch, but they opted for the whole meal deal and it is such a nice touch," said Clark, health initiatives representative for American Cancer Society Region 6.

The survivor support groups are really a phenomena for once upon a time, prostate cancer was such a sensitive issue for men that they didn't talk about it.

"This Man to Man program is the largest in a six-state area of the Mid-South Division of American Cancer Society," said Clark.

She thinks it is so successful because of the support of Regional Urology and especially Moss' dedication.

"These men and their spouses need to know how to treat the disease ... the health care team there is so interested in providing information. Dr. Moss dedicates one night a month to stay late and serve people who are not necessarily his patients, as a service to the community. He sees it as a service, almost a ministry to be accessible," said Clark.



Elrod



Gilley



Clark

Prostate cancer facts

Prostate cancer is a malignancy that develops from cells of the prostate gland. The prostate is a male sex gland about the size of a walnut and located below the bladder.

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men.

Prostate cancer is slow growing in the majority of men who have it.

Risk factors

Race: It occurs 60 percent more often in black men than it does in white men. Black men are twice as likely to die of prostate cancer as white men.

Age: The incidence of prostate cancer increases with age. More than 70 percent of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men over age 65.

Diet: Men who eat high-fat diets, particularly saturated fat, may have a greater chance of developing the cancer and international studies suggest that dietary fat may be a risk factor.

Family history: Recent genetic studies suggest that strong familial predisposition may be responsible for 5 to 10 percent of prostate cancers.

Symptoms

Weak or interrupted urine flow. Frequent urination or inability to urinate.

Difficulty starting or stopping urine flow.

Blood in the urine or pain or burning during urination.

Frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, pelvis or upper thighs.

Who should be screened

Men age 50 and older should have annual PSA testing and digital rectal exams once a year.

Younger men at high risk should discuss the need for annual testing before they reach age 45, maybe as early as 40.

Source: American Cancer Society

Free screenings

Partners in Wellness, a program funded by grant sources and housed at Feist-Weiller Cancer Center, provides PSA and digital rectal exams, said Jerry McLarty, director of cancer prevention and control at Feist-Weiller. PSA and digital rectal exams are conducted the third Wednesday of every month at LSU Hospital Urology Clinic.

Cost: Free. (Free blood sugar and cholesterol testing is also done. Free mammograms, pap smears and complete pelvic exams are also conducted through the program.)

Clients can walk in, but an appointment is recommended. Information or to make an appointment: (800) 582-4523 or 675-7717.

LSU Hospital-Shreveport The Urology Department annually provides five days of free screenings for PSA and digital rectal exams, usually the last week of September. The date is not yet set for 2005.

Information: Call 675-5408.

Willis-Knighton Health System will conduct free screenings for PSA and digital rectal exams during September, Prostate Health Month. Times and dates are not set.

Information: 212-8225.



Can you say 'I love you' too much?

By Carolyn Hax
Gannett News Service

QUESTION: Is there such a phenomenon as saying "I love you" too much?

Background info: I've been dating him for 13 months (my longest relationship); we're sophomores in college; he's flaw-ful and perfect, and he happens to be the boy I am going to marry. I say I love you as often as I think to say it ... maybe five times a day. Is this too weird? He reacts with an "I know" and the usual "I love you, too." What'ya think? — Cambridge, Mass.

ANSWER: I think he's trying (not) to tell you something. Four or so times a day.

I want to say yay for you, and I guess I am saying it, since brimming over with more love than you can contain deserves a yay.

But. There's "in love with someone" and there's "in love with being in love," and with you only one of these is a certainty.

The phenomenon you have to worry about here is enthusiasm toxicity — when you gush so much that it stops being credible. Even people with the healthiest egos will have a hard time believing they're lovable enough to rate five Hove-yous a day.

(Healthy) people want to be loved for who they are, not for the role they play in your life. Whether your boyfriend is feeling any skepticism in this regard, I can't say, but those I-knows suggest there's gush-fatigue there of some sort. Try thinking less of "the boy I'm going to marry," and concentrate more on the boy.

QUESTION: A good friend of mine and his girlfriend are breaking up, and my friends are grilling me for

his perspective since they know only her side of the story. I don't think it's anyone's business and, to be honest, he and I don't talk about it much.

I've tried to say that he and I haven't discussed the breakup but neither the ex-girlfriend nor my other friends will leave it be. Short of not hanging out with them anymore, is there something I can say that I haven't said to make this stop? — Va.

ANSWER: "We haven't discussed it much, but if we had, I still wouldn't betray his confidence. Please respect me on this."

I know, you've said this, but: The only alternatives are to start avoiding these nosy villagers altogether — which, however tempting it may be at this point, is rather extreme — or to start blabbing, which isn't right (unless the villagers are coming after you in a torch-wielding mob).

If it's any consolation, they will eventually lose interest and leave you alone.

The ex-girlfriend, though, presents a bit of a twist. Someone who needs to work her ex-boyfriend's friend for information about her own life is either behaving like a very typical junior-high-schooler, or has been left cruelly in the dark by this guy.

If you have reason to believe it's the latter, then consider nudging your good friend to talk to her already. Not just out of kindness to her, but, if it appears the mob, also to yourself.

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ABCs of self-control can help manage holiday anxiety

Gannett News Service

Dr. James P. Nicolai, who offers stress management seminars, offers tips for handling the added pressure:

A: Activity

"Tension happens when we don't allow our muscles to deal with the stress we have," Nicolai says. "If we don't move, the energy has to go somewhere." Typically it goes to the muscles, but for some people, stress accumulates in the shoulders or back; stomachs, causing ulcers and acid reflux; or neck and skull, causing headaches.

Just getting up to walk, even just 15 to 20 minutes per day, helps, Nicolai says. Before work, after work, on a lunch break — any time is good to help work out that tension.

B: Breathing

"If I was going to teach anyone anything about stress management, it's breathing," Nicolai says. "The way we breathe — chest breathing — is one step away from panic."

Deep breaths, using the diaphragm, is how we should breathe. Both chest and belly should rise when inhaling

C: Cortisol

When bodies are under stress they produce adrenaline, but also cortisol,

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Despite divorce families can rally to celebrate holidays

By Doreen Nagle
Gannett News Service

It's holiday time and the last thing your kids want is to be the pawn between you and your ex. On the contrary — their holiday happiness should be your prime focus. But where will they go when both mom and dad want to spend the same special day with them?

Make compromises

■ Is it about spending the day with the kids, or are you just trying to make sure your ex doesn't get them on that day? Everyone has expectations tied into the holidays; that includes your children. Try not to push and pull them.

■ If you must "trade off," working out fine details in advance will avoid friction. Where and when — exactly — will the exchange take place?

■ Has the relationship with your ex deteriorated? Is there a third party willing to pick up and drop off the kids so your mutual animosity doesn't ruin your children's good time?

PARENTING IN A NUTSHELL

Work together

■ Keep your attitude in check. Making snide remarks about your children's other parent — especially in front of them — will diminish the holiday feel you work so hard to create.

■ Is there a new relationship? Can it be blended in for the day? If not, are you and your ex willing to spend the day without the new partner(s), for the sake of your children?

■ New kids as a result of a new relationship? Do not let the new family overshadow the children you have together. Help all the kids get along by introducing a game they can play together.

■ Work with your ex to make sure gift giving won't get competitive. Buying extravagant gifts so you can outdo the other parent won't make up for the divorce. Confer with your child's other parent before hitting the mall.

■ Ask extended family members on both sides to respect your gift-giving objectives by following the same guidelines.

On the special day

■ Consult with the kids about holiday plans vs. springing the plans on them as your ex is ringing the doorbell.

■ Your children have lost their home life as they knew it; it's important that they don't lose each other. Don't divide them as an equitable solution for you and your spouse. They will be much happier sharing the day together as usual.

■ How did your family spend the holidays in pre-divorce days? A quiet day rallying 'round the turkey? A big event with extended family? Feeding the less advantaged? Try keeping favorite activities in the schedule: a familiar routine will lessen the stress.

■ Start new traditions, ones built around your new lifestyle.

■ Can your feelings be put aside in order to share the holiday with your ex as a family? This is the ideal solution for exes that are civil, even caring.

Parenting tip from the trenches

■ "You can't please everyone, so I decided to please my children first. My parents insisted that we open presents at their place the first year my husband left, but the kids wanted a day with just Santa and me. I am very glad I decided to honor my children's wishes. It was a pretty emotional day."

■

Doreen Nagle is author of *But I Don't Feel Too Old to be a Mommy* (HCI, \$12.95). She welcomes your parenting tips and concerns at parentinginanutshell@joomla.com.