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# yale health care

NEWS FROM THE YALE HEALTH PLAN

VOL. II NO. 3

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## Preventive Measures Help Reduce Lyme Risk

ROBERT DEBERNARDO, M.D.

Office of Health Promotion

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Contributing Writer

Lyme, Connecticut, home to art galleries and elegant architecture, was the center of a mysterious outbreak of an arthritis-like disease in 1975. Later traced to an organism called *Borrelia burgdorfi*, harbored in the guts of infected deer ticks, Lyme disease has been reported beyond Connecticut. Over 10,000 cases are diagnosed annually in the U.S. Connecticut, however, is still the highest-risk area; in 1998 the state's incident rate was nearly 104 cases per 100,000 population.

Even though the disease has been

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## New Drugs Expand Diabetes Treatment Options

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Diabetes mellitus, more commonly referred to as just diabetes is the world's most common metabolic disorder; in the United States, it affects over 15 million people. Diabetes is marked by abnormally high blood sugar levels. The body either does not produce or does not properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert sugar or glucose into fuel essential for metabolic functioning. Insulin is normally produced by the pancreas in response to food ingestion. It travels through the blood stream, communicating to other cells of the body the message to "let glucose inside." When this mechanism breaks down, the glucose remains in the blood stream and cells are starved of the glucose they require for their energy demands.



In Type 1 (or insulin dependent) diabetes, the cells of the pancreas that are responsible for insulin production are destroyed by the immune system. Type 1 diabetes usually affects children and young adults and the symptoms associated with high blood sugar such as fatigue, blurred vision, excess urination and thirst usually appear abruptly. The cause of the more common Type 2 (non-insulin dependent) diabetes is less clear. It usually affects

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### C A L E N D A R

**Mondays**  
Weight Watchers at Work

**Tuesdays**  
Blood Pressure Screenings

**Wednesdays**  
Early Pregnancy Classes

FOR MORE, TURN TO CALENDAR LISTINGS ON PAGE 8

## Important telephone numbers

Urgent Care	432-0123
<i>Open 24 hrs/day, seven days per week</i>	
Toll Free Information	1-877-YHP-CARE
Pharmacy	432-0246
	432-0033
<i>Hours of operation</i>	
Monday–Friday	7:30 AM–6:30 PM
Saturday	8:30 AM–3:30 PM
Patient Representative	432-0109
Medicare/Retiree Coordinator	432-8134
Outpatient Referrals/Claims	432-0250
Inpatient Care Facility	432-0001

# in touch

## Health Promotion Office Has Info, Will Travel

RHEA HIRSHMAN

*Contributing Writer*



THE HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM (LEFT TO RIGHT): S. RINALDI, RN, MPH; M. MILLER, RN; M. YOUNG, RECEPTIONIST; R. ESPOSITO, RECEPTIONIST; L. BELL, MS, RD; R. DEBERNARDO, MD; E. DEMAYO, LPN; E. BUDRIS, RN, MSN; R. LEVENDUSKI, RN, BSN

Although it is housed on the fourth floor of the Yale Health Plan building at 17 Hillhouse Avenue, the YHP Office of Health Promotion (OHP) has an influence that can be felt not only all over the building but throughout the Yale community.

According to Ellen Budris, RN, MSN, the manager of the OHP, the office “supports the mission of YUHS by educating all our members — undergraduates, graduate and professional students, faculty, staff and families — about making healthy choices. The office’s activities include educational activities, programs and materials on everything from basic lifestyle adjustments to disease management.

Are you struggling with quitting smoking? The office organizes a Smokeout Day for the entire University community. Do you need a flu shot? The OHP (which also houses YHP’s immunization programs) sends nurses around campus to do the honors. Are you struggling with sticking to a healthy diet? The nutritionist, a member of the OHP staff, offers individual consultations as well as a variety of group activities. Have you been avoiding getting your blood pressure checked? You might as well do it when the OHP blood pressure screening program shows up at your work site. Are you a woman entering menopause

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## DIABETES TREATMENT OPTIONS

*continued from page 1*

those over 40 and the disease runs in families. Its onset is more gradual than that of Type 1 diabetes, the symptoms are less dramatic, and it frequently goes unrecognized for years. Type 1 diabetes can be treated only by the administration of insulin. Type 2 diabetes is most commonly treated with pills and can sometimes be controlled with diet and exercise alone. Some patients require insulin, usually later in the course of their disease.

The basis of diabetic treatment is a well-balanced, low-fat diet, usually with restrictions on ingestion of simple sugars, such as table sugar, sweet fruits and desserts. In those who are overweight (as most Type 2 patients are), weight loss is critical. A sensible diet should also be combined with an appropriate exercise program. In many patients, adherence to these recommendations will render medication unnecessary or at least make them work better.

Older oral agents, known as **sulfonylureas** (e.g., glipizide, glyburide), lowered blood sugar by increasing insulin production. Treatment of Type 2 diabetes has been revolutionized over the past few years by several new drugs. **Metformin** decreases the liver’s production of sugar so that blood sugar levels fall but without the weight gain and the tendency toward low blood sugar associated with sulfonylureas. **Acarbose** delays the absorption of starch from the intestine, leading to less increase in blood sugar after meals. **Troglitazone** directly enhances the sensitivity of the body’s cells to insulin. **Repaglinide** also increases insulin production but with a rapid onset and a short duration of action, which may result in better blood sugar levels after meals.

Drugs may be used in combination. Which drug is best for you is a question only your primary care clinician or endocrinologist can answer, as several have side effects that may make them less desirable for a particular individual. No matter what the specific treatment program, the key in diabetes management is the lowering of glucose levels, along with control of cholesterol and blood pressure. In addition, avoiding smoking and having regular eye and foot examinations will optimize the chance for continued good health.

Yale Health Plan’s Office of Health Promotion (203-432-0093) and the Yale Diabetes Center (203-737-1YDC) offer education for those with diabetes and their families.



# from the desk of

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## paul genecin, m.d.

director, yale university health services

Every day on television, in the newspapers and on the radio, we are bombarded with news about health. The media transmit fast-breaking research findings directly to us, often before some of the most sensational findings have been scientifically verified. At the same time, we are inundated with media reports and even with direct consumer advertising about “wellness” activities. These reports extend beyond common sense advice. We are also deluged with information about dietary supplements, novel hormone treatments, newly-developed vaccines and guidelines for immunization, and remedies to deal with everything from weight loss to male pattern baldness to sexual dysfunction.

In the face of this surfeit of information, many of us wonder what

is really important. How do we get the information we really need? In the past, our periodic visits to our clinicians sufficed – but that was in a simpler age when there was less information and we were less preoccupied with health and wellness. We assumed that our clinicians would tell us what we needed to know. For many of us, office visits with clinicians no longer fully satisfy our desire for information. We may look to other sources for health information, preferably trustworthy sources that our clinicians can endorse. At Yale Health Plan, we recognize our members’ desire to lead healthy lives as whole people, not just as patients. Our members want information through additional channels besides visits to the clinics.

In this issue, you can find out about some of the activities of the

Office of Health Promotion, the YHP department that coordinates our health education activities. Our programs address prevention of as well as treatments and coping strategies for specific diseases. Other health promotion initiatives focus on important vaccines, reliable information about diet and exercise, stress reduction, habits such as tobacco and alcohol use, and normal life-cycle concerns such as pregnancy, menopausal issues and the aging process. The Office of Health Promotion works in collaboration with your clinicians to provide information in brochures, in lectures and seminars, in outreach programs around campus, and on the Internet. I hope that you find our health educational materials to be useful. As always, we welcome your input.

### HEALTH PROMOTION OFFICE

*continued from page 2*

or a person newly diagnosed with diabetes? The OHP coordinates programs, presented by health plan clinicians, on these and other topics.

Budris emphasizes that the office does not do all the teaching and preventive clinical activities, but rather acts as the information-gathering and organizing force. “We work through the clinical departments so that we can organize programs around members’ needs.”

This responsiveness is also evident in the programs geared toward students. For many, college is the first time they have spent a prolonged stay away from home, a time when young adults are making health and lifestyle choices that

may have an impact on the rest of their lives. Health educator Sally Rinaldi, RN, MPH, notes, “When I arrived over 13 years ago, the peer health educators were the student AIDS educators. Then we recognized that students needed information about more than AIDS prevention.” Since then, Rinaldi and other staff members, including staff from the Department of Mental Hygiene, have worked closely with students to develop peer education and peer counseling programs in which highly-trained student volunteers address student needs. Each spring, about 25 peer educators are trained in preparation for the following fall, when they work in small groups with members of the incoming class on issues including alcohol and drug abuse, eating concerns, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, abstinence, sexual assault and risk

reduction. The peer educators also provide dozens of presentations throughout the year to Yale groups as well as to groups off-campus.

The OHP even provides some ongoing education for YHP clinicians. Rinaldi coordinates a series of monthly grand rounds (lectures), for all YHP clinical staff on topics ranging from migraine headaches to the new Lyme disease vaccine to the latest techniques in orthopedic surgery.

Since, as Budris says, “Every aspect of health care involves an educational component,” OHP’s future plans include increasing the use of the Internet to provide interactive health education programming to provide even easier access to information for YHP members. Watch for it.



# questions, answers

*By answering your questions, this column will help you get the most out of your YHP membership.*

*Send your questions to:  
Member Services Q & A,  
Yale Health Plan,  
17 Hillhouse Ave.,  
P.O. Box 208237  
New Haven, CT  
06520-8237.*

*We'll get them answered by someone "in the know."*

## OUT-OF-AREA COVERAGE

*As a member of Yale Health Plan, you are covered for emergency care, urgent care and pre-authorized short-term follow-up care when you are away from the Greater New Haven area.*

**Q. How do I contact YHP while I am away from New Haven?**

**A.** If you need medical advice or wish to report a claim, call the toll-free number: 877-YHP-CARE (877-947-2273). For general information, you can contact YHP electronically by emailing us at [member.services@yale.edu](mailto:member.services@yale.edu) or by visiting us at our Web site, [www.yale.edu/uhs](http://www.yale.edu/uhs).

**Q. What is considered an emergency?**

**A.** It is defined as a major acute medical problem or major acute trauma that requires immediate medical attention, or a condition that could lead to serious harm if treatment is not received or is delayed.

**Q. What should I do if I have an emergency?**

**A.** First and foremost, you should seek care. Your health and well-being are of greatest importance! You do not need to call YHP before receiving emergency treatment. However, you should notify the Claims Department at 203-432-0250 within 48 hours (2 business days) of receiving treatment so that we may coordinate insurance coverage with the clinician from whom you received the emergency care.

**Q. What if I am away and have a serious problem that might not qualify as an emergency?**

**A.** You are also covered away from campus for urgent situations. An urgent

medical situation is the sudden and unexpected onset of an acute medical problem or trauma requiring immediate medical attention. Care for nonacute phases of chronic conditions, maintenance care, and routine care are not considered urgent. If you are able to, you can call Urgent Care (203-432-0123) or your clinician to obtain medical advice over the phone. If that is not possible you should seek the care you need. If you are away from New Haven County, you may receive urgent care at any medical facility and receive the same coverage as for emergency care, including short-term follow-up care if pre-authorized.

**Q. What happens if circumstances prevent me from contacting YUHS within 48 hours?**

**A.** If your condition prevents you or your representative from contacting the Claims Department within 48 hours, you will still be covered for the emergency or urgent condition, but you should contact Claims as soon as possible to ensure that YHP clinical staff are aware of your condition and to request Claims to authorize follow-up care should it be needed. Remember to carry your YHP card with you at all times; it can provide valuable information if you can't communicate.

**Q. What if my condition requires follow-up care?**

**A.** Short-term follow-up care that is pre-authorized will be covered. YHP clinical staff will assist in coordinating follow-up care, if needed. For assistance with pre-authorization, call 203-432-0250 or YHP's toll-free number, 877-YHP-CARE.

# the yhp staff

## *YUHS Associate Director Retires*



Best wishes to Severio (Bob) Fodero who recently retired from Yale University Health Services. Fodero, a well-known member of the Yale community, came to the University in 1957 as Assistant to the Director of the Department of University Health. In 1965 he was appointed to the planning committee that recommended the establishment of a coordinated university health services open to all students, faculty and employees. Yale University Health Services opened on July 1, 1971 and the Yale Health Plan became the first comprehensive, prepaid medical program in the country to be offered to an entire university community. Since 1971, Fodero served YUHS as Assistant

Administrator and then as Associate Director of Administration.

Fodero's dedication to community service was widely recognized. He received five Elm-Ivy awards, given each year in recognition of the recipients' efforts to increase cooperation and understanding between the University and the city of New Haven. Fodero has served on the medical support team for Special Olympics for many years and headed that team's effort for the 1995 World Games.

Fodero's retirement plans include pursuing his interests in photography and travel, and continued participation in a variety of community activities.

## *Diabetes Educators Emphasize Holistic Perspective*

"Diabetes affects everything," says Linda Ryan, APRN, MSN, CDE (certified diabetes educator). Ryan, who came to YHP in 1992, was intrigued by "the intricacy of the disease" and did a diabetes concentration when she was at Yale School of Nursing. A family nurse practitioner in Undergraduate Medicine, Ryan carries a regular caseload as well as working with students with diabetes; she sees a number of patients with Type 1 or "juvenile" diabetes (see front page article).

Unlike Ryan, Liz Popoff, APRN, MSN, CDE came to her role as a diabetes educator more gradually. Popoff, an adult nurse practitioner in Internal Medicine, came to YHP in 1975. "I began to teach people how to monitor their own blood sugar and as time went on I picked up more information. Eventually I took the certification exam." Like Ryan, she carries a regular caseload in addition to working with the diabetic patients who are referred to her for education by their primary care clinicians.

As diabetes educators, both clinicians work closely with members of the YHP staff, including the primary care clinicians, the nutritionist (who helps patients with restructuring and monitoring their diets) and the endocrinologist (the physician specialist). They emphasize that managing diabetes requires a holistic approach. Popoff says, "You have to know what people do from day to day." Ryan adds, "You have to ask, When do they eat lunch? When do they go to class? When do they work? Who do they have as support systems? Who does the cooking? Or someone who is on insulin is climbing up Science Hill and then having a low blood sugar reaction. What happened? Every patient is different."

In addition to working directly with people with diabetes and their families, Popoff and Ryan coordinate a course in diabetes management. The course, which runs once or twice a year, is open to the entire Yale Community. Popoff says, "We encourage spouses, children, parents,



ELIZABETH POPOFF,  
APRN, CDE

*(Linda Ryan, APRN, MSN, CDE, was not available for the photo.)*

significant others to come. Managing diabetes is a family affair."

Part of working with individuals with diabetes involves offering emotional support. Popoff says, "It's difficult for anyone with a chronic disease to accept it. It's not always easy to apply what should be done to one's life." Ryan adds, "We go step by step. There's a lot that a diabetic needs to learn about self-care: diet, exercise, eyecare, foot care, taking medication. There's a larger day-to-day disease management component to living with diabetes than to living with other chronic illnesses."

# information

## BOOK REVIEW

### LYME DISEASE: THE CAUSE, THE CURE, THE CONTROVERSY

by Alan Barbour  
*The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996*

A comprehensive review of topics related to Lyme disease, including symptoms, diagnostic tests, steps to avoid getting Lyme disease, and treatment of ticks and rashes caused by tick bites. Recommended for those wishing more of an in-depth understanding of this disease. Available for review from the Betty Stowe Memorial Bookshelf (4th floor of YHP).



### THE JOHNS HOPKINS GUIDE TO DIABETES FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

by Christopher Saudek, Richard Rubin, and Cynthia Shump  
*The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997*

This book does an excellent job of organizing and presenting the most important issues in the care of diabetes in an easy to read, up-to-date text. Chapters include understanding diabetes, issues in controlling diabetes, complications, and the future of care. Available for review from the Betty Stowe Memorial Bookshelf.

### EATING WELL, LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES

by Mark Feinglos and Claudia Plaisted  
*Viking Books, 1997*

The course of diabetes can be markedly improved by careful attention to diet and exercise. This easy to read book describes current dietary strategies for people with diabetes, including background about the disease, meal planning and recipes, and a complete description of the food exchange lists and how to use them. This book also helps to resolve some of the controversies associated with present-day diets.

### MONTH OF MEALS SERIES: MENUS AND MEAL PLANNING TIPS

by the American Diabetes Association  
(800-232-3472)

Much more than a cookbook, each book in this series shows how to combine different meals to achieve a desired daily caloric level. Beautiful food photography accompanies the recipes, and each book discusses various nutrition topics.



### SCHEDULE SPORTS AND CAMP PHYSICALS EARLY

Many children will need a physical exam to participate in spring sports or to attend summer camp. The YHP Pediatric Department asks that you schedule physical exams early, before the busier months of May and June. Please call (203-432-0206) for an appointment.

### TRAVELING THIS SUMMER?

Yale University Health Services offers a travel clinic to its members. Consultations are provided by Yale tropical medicine physicians to YHP members and the Yale Community. No referral is needed. It is a fee-for-service clinic and all fees for consultations or immunizations must be paid at the time services are rendered. Please call (203-432-0093) 8-10 weeks prior to your departure to obtain a travel itinerary form and arrange for an appointment, or to ask any questions about the service.

### YHP PATIENT COMMENT CARDS

The patient comment card system, in operation since 1973, provides YHP staff with members' comments about services and benefits. All comments are read by appropriate YHP professional staff and administration. The cards are available in all YHP clinical departments and can be deposited in the box opposite the elevators on the first floor of the University Health Services Center. You can also submit your comments electronically via our Web site at [www.yale.edu/uhs](http://www.yale.edu/uhs). We will respond to you personally, if requested, and your comments will be held in confidence.

### PHARMACY RENOVATIONS ON THE HORIZON

Major renovations in the YUHS pharmacy will begin June 1st! While things will look different for a while, the results will be worth it: a more streamlined, efficient and user-friendly pharmacy system for all our members. The pharmacy will maintain its normal hours (Monday-Friday from 7:30 am to 6:30 pm and Saturday from 8:30-3:30). The pharmacy will relocate to the 4th floor of YHP, in room 405, while the construction is underway.

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URL: [www.yale.edu/uhs](http://www.yale.edu/uhs)  
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## REDUCE LYME RISK

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recognized for over twenty years, research is still being done on its effects and on treatment options. Available diagnostic tools are fairly reliable, although not fool-proof; false negatives in blood tests are relatively common in the early stages of the disease. While specific antibiotics are generally agreed on for treatment, there is still disagreement about long-term antibiotic treatment when symptoms persist, or for those who sustain deer tick bites but do not show symptoms. A frustrating aspect of the disease is that as many as 15%-35% of people bitten by infected ticks do not develop the characteristic bull's-eye rash. Other symptoms — fever, extreme fatigue, headaches, joint pain, dizziness, numbness in the extremities, stiff neck, general achiness, vision problems, facial numbness — can mimic everything from the flu to multiple sclerosis. Late-onset Lyme disease can occur months or years after the tick bite and can manifest itself

as arthritis or, less commonly, as neurologic or cardiac problems. So if you know or suspect that you have a tick bite, seek medical help promptly and don't be shy about asking about the clinician's knowledge of the disease.

The American Lyme Disease Foundation notes that up to 80% of cases begin in the back yard, so preventive measures should be taken close to home as well as when you are on an outing. Ask your clinician about the use of topical tick repellents. Ticks search out exposed skin, so keep covered: wear a hat and tuck pants into boots; avoid open-toed shoes and going barefoot. Wash clothing in hot water immediately after you've been outdoors. Ticks can ride into your house on your pets, so check them thoroughly and frequently. Clear your lawn of piles of wood, leaves and branches, where ticks like to congregate, and let the lawn dry between waterings; ticks cannot survive in dry, sunny areas. Keep bird feeders a distance from the house; they attract

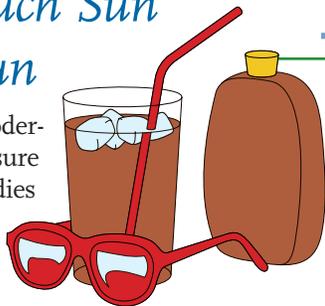
mice, some of which carry the deer tick. If you do find a tick, remove it carefully with a blunt tweezers without crushing it and dispose of it in a sealed plastic bag. Note the date, in case symptoms develop and the clinician wants to know when the bite occurred.

A Lyme disease vaccine has recently been approved, but it is not 100% effective and, while clinical studies have shown the vaccine to be safe, all the potential side effects are not yet known. Also, antibody levels produced by the vaccine are the same ones measured by the current Lyme disease screening test. So, if a vaccinated person discovers a tick, more extensive screening may be necessary.

More information about Lyme disease is available from the YHP Office of Health Promotion (203-432-0093). Also, the American Lyme Disease Foundation has a Web site at [www.aldf.com](http://www.aldf.com).

## Too Much Sun Isn't Fun

Although moderate sun exposure helps our bodies manufacture vitamin D — essential for calcium absorption — too much sun can cause everything from eye problems to skin cancer. Remember that children need sun protection, too. Protect your eyes with a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses. Protect your skin by using sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15 on all exposed areas. Don't forget your ears and the back of your neck. Protect your lips with a lip sunscreen. Avoid exposure to sun from 10 am to 2 pm, when the rays are strongest. Get medical help if you develop a rash or fever after getting a sunburn. Avoid dehydration by drinking lots of water or iced herb (non-caffeine) teas. Caffeine teas will only dehydrate you further.



# healthy ideas

## FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT DIABETES

Become a member of the American Diabetes Association. Each month you will receive a magazine called *Diabetes Forecast* that features articles on people with diabetes, recipes, research updates, discussion of specific treatments for managing diabetes, and product information. Annual dues are \$24. For more information call 800-232-3472, or write American Diabetes Association, PO Box 363, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-8303 or join online at <http://www.diabetes.org/DiabetesForecast>

## Reduce Risk of Food Borne Illnesses

According to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) food borne infections such as *Campylobacter*, *E. coli* and *Salmonella* sicken between 6 and 33 million people in the U.S. each year. Reduce your risk of contracting serious illnesses by avoiding raw or undercooked eggs, hamburger meat, poultry, fish and pork; avoid raw oysters and

unpasteurized milk. In addition, an essential precaution is thorough hand-washing with soap before and after handling food. Pay particular attention to washing your hands after you have handled raw poultry or meat; the FDA found that 25% of men and 14% of women regularly fail to do so.



# calendar

## ONGOING WELLNESS PROGRAMS

**Early Pregnancy Class**  
Held in room 405 on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 10:30–11:30 for YHP members. To register, call the Ob/Gyn Department at 203-432-0222 or stop by the appointment desk. We encourage you to bring a supportive person.

**Weight Watchers at Work**  
Mondays, 12:15–1:00 in room 405. You can join any time. For information, call 203-432-1892.

**Blood Pressure Screenings**  
Tuesdays from 10:00–11:00 in room 406. Open to the Yale community free of charge, by referral or on a walk-in basis. For info, call 203-432-6853.

**Health Risk Assessments**  
Health risk assessment questionnaires are offered to the entire Yale community free of charge on the first Wednesday and Thursday of the month from 2:00–3:00 in room 406. For more information, call 203-432-6853.

**Post-partum Reunion Classes**  
Held on the 3rd Friday of each month in room 405 from 10:00–11:30. Please bring your new babies to this great support network for all new moms! Conducted by Wendy Madore, RNC. Call the Obstetrics/Gynecology Department (203-432-0222) to register.

**Adult CPR Classes**  
Adult CPR classes are held monthly. For information, call 203-432-1892.

**Yale Health Plan Cancer Support Group**  
Life Options is a support group for adult YHP members who have been diagnosed with cancer, regardless of type of cancer or stage of disease. The group meets weekly with a facilitator. There are three 15-week programs each year. Group members can enroll in consecutive series of meetings. Funded partially by the Edith S. Hallo Fund and by a small weekly fee charged to each participant. To enroll or for more information, contact the facilitator, Mona Felts, MSW, at 203-432-0290.

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