

Pharmacist gives women tips on drug safety, health

By Alice Hrnicek

Safe drug use and errorless prescription filling are more likely when a person sticks with one pharmacist, a registered pharmacist said, Wednesday.

Linda Brown, who spoke at Women/Speak, works with four other pharmacists at Family Drug and is involved with Planned Parenthood. She said a person should expect a pharmacist to be a resource person who freely gives information.

"If he doesn't, then you can't use the drugs as safely," she said. "When you ask questions, it tells the pharmacist to carry

on his responsibilities."

A pharmacist who keeps a patient profile is important because one might cause problems when another drug is added to the patient's intake, she said. Often two drugs are prescribed by two different physicians for different purposes without either being aware of the other condition.

Information sheets

The pharmacist said patient information sheets, which explain possible symptoms or side effects of each drug, are necessary for consumers.

"I would like to push for legislation that mandates patient information sheets for all

drugs. There's no way the pharmacist or doctor can tell you all about a drug," she said.

Addressing the issue of generics, substitutes which cost less than patent drugs, Brown said she will usually honor preferences by the consumer if he expresses an interest in buying a less expensive variety. However, if a physician states a preference in the prescription, she will not substitute, she said.

The difference between generics and patents is in the way they are formulated, Brown said.

"A doctor may say the body doesn't absorb the generic as well for certain drugs. The formulation makes a difference on how viable the product is to the body."

Generic laws necessary

"A lot of judgment is involved," she added. "In most cases, a pharmacist doesn't know more than a doctor and will follow what they say."

Because of uncertainties about effects, generic laws and more viability studies are

necessary, she said.

In considering birth control pills, a woman must weigh the risks, Brown said.

"I can't sit here and feel any drug is completely safe. We know they are highly effective for preventing pregnancy. A young, healthy woman has little chance of developing a blood clot, but if she takes birth control pills she has a slightly higher risk."

Women over 40 are five times more likely to have a blood clot if she's on the pill, she said.

The labels of high- and low-dose pills refer to the estrogen component. A British study indicates that anyone on more than 50 micrograms of estrogen per pill falls in higher risk category for side effects. Thirty-five micrograms still offers good protection, she said. When no estrogen is in the pill, the woman might suffer from unpredictable side-effects, she said.

Brown said women should realize that vaginal infections are extremely common, especially with women on the pill.

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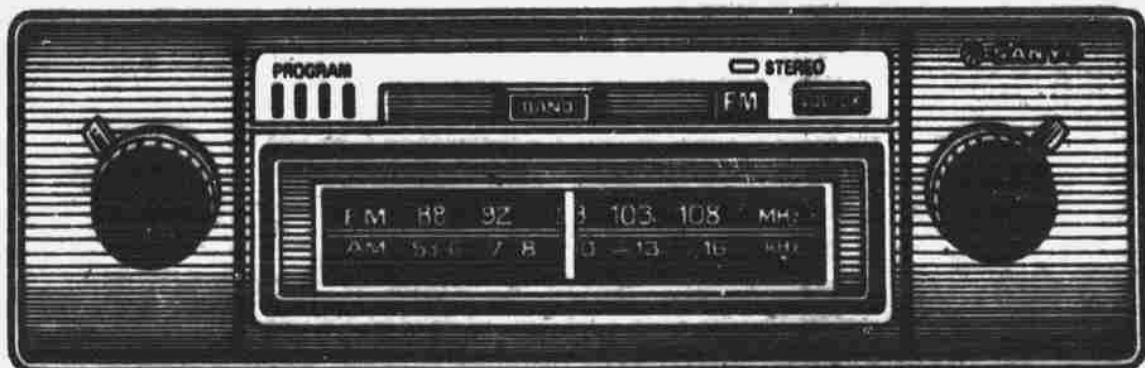
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'Granddaddy' trivia bowl held

Appleton, Wis. (CH)—Trivia lovers can take heart even if they missed this year's 14th Annual Midwest Trivia Contest sponsored by Lawrence University's WLFM radio station. The answer to the 100-point final question (by tradition, next year's 100-point first question) is out.

The question: "Twenty miles south of Dublin there is a hill called Bray's Head. On that hill is a cross. What is the inscription on the cross?" The answer: "Christ regi ad 1950."

Traditionally held the first weekend in February, the Lawrence trivia contest claims to be the "granddaddy" of all such contests.

LU's Larry Page, director of broadcasting, says a team of trivia nuts has already

been turned loose to find questions for next year.

The job is not as taxing as it may seem; any subject is fair game. For example, this year no one answered Page's question: "What was the name of the cat named Best Maine Coon Cat in the Midwest in 1978?" The only reason Page knew the answer was because the cat is his.

First place in this year's off-campus contest was claimed by a group of high school students, while the second place went to some LU alums and the third to a group of city librarians.

The first place on-campus team named itself after a local pizza joint in exchange for free pizza during the contest. Page said the pizza parlor owner basked in "lots of free publicity" from the arrangement.

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