1-10-18-95 A	Disaster Research Press Kit	Disaster	JB
2-10-19-95	Business	Banquet	JL
3-10-20-95	Library	TexShare	JL
4-10-20-95 A	Meat Judging Team wins	Meat10-7	JB

MEDIA ADVISORY
REF: 1-10-18-95
CONTACT: Josh Allen

COMMON SENSE TIPS TO PREPARE FOR WHEN TORNADOES HIT

LUBBOCK -- Researchers with Texas Tech University's Tornado Intercept Team are working to eliminate inaccurate information and contribute new knowledge about severe storms. The team is composed of atmospheric science graduate students who track severe storms that might spawn tornadoes and who document this storm activity with video equipment.

Tornadoes and severe storms often form with little or no advance warning. Engineers and scientists at Texas Tech University's Institute for Disaster Research, offer these safety tips for when a tornado strikes:

• Be aware of tornado season in your region. In the Gulf region and southern-tier states, tornadoes are most likely to hit during late winter. In late March and April, tornadoes tend to strike the lower Mississippi, Tennessee and Ohio river valleys, and they're most active in April and May in the western plains.

• Monitor radio and television weather reports for advance warning of approaching storms. However, if you have little access to broadcast storm warnings, pay attention to any rapidly changing weather conditions that could signal a tornado, such as a progression from intense hail to deafening quiet.

• In a home, seek shelter in a closet or room protected by as many interior walls as possible. Never waste time opening windows to counteract pressure differentials. It's a misconception that buildings will explode if windows are closed.

Researchers at the Institute for Disaster Research say their analysis of the misconception that "rapid pressure changes cause buildings to explode" was an instrumental factor that led the National Weather Service (NWS) to change its public warning system.

"The NWS no longer issues bulletins telling people to open windows before taking cover. The message now is don't worry about indoor pressures, just take cover," says Richard E. Peterson, director of Texas Tech's atmospheric science group.

• Never remain in your car or in a mobile home. Often vehicles are picked up and smashed by tornadoes and high winds. Most people who died in the April 1979 twister that struck Wichita Falls were killed in cars.

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SAFETY TIPS/PAGE 2

• If you're outdoors, seek shelter in a depression or culvert to avoid flying debris, the cause of most damage and injuries. Don't take shelter in drainage ditches because of their likelihood to flood.

• If you're in or near a large open building, such as a gymnasium, school or auditorium, seek shelter in a hallway or small interior room.

SOURCES:

James R. McDonald, Ph.D., (806) 742-3476
Director of the Institute for Disaster Research at Texas Tech and Civil Engineering Professor

Richard E. Peterson, Ph.D., (806) 742-3418
Chairman of the Department of Geosciences and Professor of Atmospheric Science

-30-

MEDIA ADVISORY
REF: 1-10-18-95
CONTACT: Josh Allen

INSTITUTE FOR DISASTER RESEARCH

LUBBOCK -- Researchers with the Institute for Disaster Research at Texas Tech University have conducted lab research and on-site documentation of natural disasters since 1970. The institute's faculty and students routinely study the causes and effects of tornadoes, hurricanes and low-level blasts, looking for preventive methods to reduce the damage these severe storms can cause.

Researchers have conducted field examinations of hurricane and tornado disasters within the United States, Mexico and Australia. Institute facilities within the College of Engineering are a glass research and testing laboratory, a wind-load testing site and a laboratory in which an air cannon is used to launch projectiles and measure their penetration through various building materials.

The institute's researchers began their studies after the May 11, 1970, storm that destroyed one-fourth of Lubbock. In 1992, they examined the damage left by Hurricane Andrew in South Florida and Louisiana. Researchers Kishor Mehta, James McDonald and H. Scott Norville observed most of the property damage occurred from wind and water penetration after the initial storm blast and the buildings would have withstood this damage with better siding, window and roofing systems.

In 1993, these researchers helped recommend new building codes for Dade and Broward counties in South Florida by testing storm shutters with the air cannon. Mehta points to information gathered from the damage of storms like Hurricane Andrew to saving lives through better construction and engineering strategies. Survey teams are prepared to go into the field again this year.

Research grants are funding projects such as an evaluation of the effectiveness of building codes and construction practices in preventing hurricane damage to residential and commercial buildings for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. A grant from the National Committee on Property Insurance has funded the development of a computer model that will help insurance underwriters predict the performance of existing buildings in wind storms. The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory is sponsoring a project for the development of building design criteria that resist the impact of tornado generated missiles, thus protecting important Department of Energy facilities.

-more-

Work has begun on a computer simulation of wind blasts to aid in designing a building that can withstand high winds. Once completed this simulation would point out wind problems before a building was constructed reducing costly property damage during a storm.

SOURCES:

James McDonald, Ph.D., (806) 742-3479
Director of Institute for Disaster Research and Professor of Civil Engineering

McDonald can comment on general characteristics and the history of tornado damage. He also has researched residential building improvements and insurance companies' roles in supporting residential and commercial wind-resistant construction.

Kishor Mehta, Ph.D., (806) 742-3476
Director of the Wind Engineering Research Center and Professor of Civil Engineering

Mehta, a longtime wind researcher, can comment on effects of high wind loads on buildings and the characteristics of wind damage.

Richard E. Peterson, Ph.D., (806) 742-3418
Researcher for the Institute for Disaster Research and Professor of Atmospheric Science

Peterson can comment on information and characteristics of tornadoes and advanced research in reading storms that are likely to produce tornadic activity.

H. Scott Norville, Ph.D., (806) 742-1930
Field researcher for the Institute for Disaster Research and Associate Professor of Civil Engineering

Norville can comment about on-site research and studies of wind-damaged areas with a research emphasis on glass breakage and design improvements.

MEDIA ADVISORY
REF: 1-10-18-95
CONTACT: Josh Allen

TEXAS TORNADOES TO BE EXPECTED

LUBBOCK -- Tornadoes and Texas go hand-in-hand, especially in the spring, say Texas Tech University researchers. The state's geographic location is a converging point for the meteorological ingredients of tornadoes. Texas is the nation's leading tornado state.

May 11, 1995 marked the 25th anniversary of the deadly Lubbock tornado that left 26 people dead. Property damage was estimated at more than $135 million.

April, May and June are the months with the most tornadoes, and most of the extraordinary storms are recorded in those months. The proximity of Gulf of Mexico moisture, however, can fuel tornadic storms during off seasons, especially in the fall when tornadoes may come in a flurry. Tornadoes are most common in the afternoon and evening. Sometimes they accompany a hurricane's approach to land.

In the years 1991, 1992 and 1993, the United States had record numbers of tornadoes. In 1993, there were 1,136 tornadoes, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. However during 1993, West Texas only reported 14 tornadoes for the year. Severe storms converged on the Mid-West, with nearly half of the nation's tornadoes occurring during the months of June and July.

In 1992, there were 1,297 tornadoes. West Texas alone recorded 88 twisters. In 1991, the number of tornadoes totaled 1,132 with 84 twisters reported in West Texas.

Some Texas tornadoes have been deadly. On April 28, 1893, 23 people died in Cisco. On May 15, 1896, Sherman lost 76 residents. Tied for the greatest death toll are the Goliad tornado of May 18, 1902, and the Waco tornado of 1953, each with 114 deaths. The Waco tragedy occurred on May 11; another tornado that day killed 11 people in San Angelo.

The White Deer tornado of April 9, 1947, is notable not only for its 68 deaths and devastation of the Texas Panhandle city of Glazier, but also for its duration: It was on the ground for more than six hours, cutting a 221-mile path across Oklahoma and Kansas. A rare tornado struck Saragosa on May 23, 1987, killing 30 people and injuring 160.
Eleven people died in the April 2, 1957, tornado in Dallas. Movie footage obtained in the storm provided some of the most quantitative information ever obtained on tornado winds.

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Texas lies at the southern end of what is commonly referred to as tornado alley. The greatest tornado frequency is along the Red River Valley, extending west to the South Plains. From the Lower Valley northwest to far West Texas, the likelihood of tornadoes is slight; however, severe storms (like the devastation at Saragosa) still may occur.

SOURCE:
Richard E. Peterson, Ph.D., (806) 742-3418
Chairman of the Department of Geosciences and Professor of Atmospheric Science

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MEDIA ADVISORY
REF: 1-10-18-95
CONTACT: Josh Allen

TEXAS TECH RESEARCHERS STUDY SEVERE WEATHER

LUBBOCK -- Texas has recorded more tornadoes than any other state in the nation, and the Texas storms have been among the largest, longest-lasting, costliest and deadliest in the world.

Texas lies at the southern end of what is commonly referred to as "tornado alley." Tornadoes generally form during severe thunderstorms. A key element in the formation of such storms is warm, moist air within the lowest few thousand feet of the atmosphere.

Texas Tech University researchers in atmospheric sciences, civil engineering, disaster research and glass testing are seeking to understand the damage caused by intense wind conditions and are searching for ways to reduce weather-related destruction.

Texas Tech's atmospheric science group, along with researchers at several other universities, is studying data collected from the Doppler radar system to analyze the structures and deep inner workings of dangerous or potentially dangerous storms.

The Doppler radar system allows meteorologists to obtain a three-dimensional view of a storm from the inside out. It provides a more efficient and complete weather outlook and aids forecasters in issuing more precise severe weather warnings to predict tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, wind shear conditions and flash floods.

Another system that offers promise for the advance warning of dangerous storms is the Wind Profiler system, said Richard Peterson, director of Texas Tech's atmospheric science group. The system, which was installed by the National Weather Service in the West Texas community of Jayton, utilizes Doppler technology via an upward-pointing radar that allows a continuous monitoring of wind direction and speed in the mid and upper levels of the atmosphere.

Because a Wind Profiler system operates around the clock, it can evaluate and report at regular intervals any changes in the flow of moist air and winds. If the system had been in place on May 11, 1970, forecasters may have been able to warn residents of a storm that destroyed one-fourth of the city of Lubbock, Peterson said.

Texas Tech's Wind Engineering Research Center was established in September 1988. Kishor Mehta, a civil engineering professor and director of the center, focuses his research on the effect of wind on buildings, people and motor vehicles.

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"The basic objective is to find out how to make use of wind and how to prevent damage caused by it," Mehta said.

Texas Tech University has been involved in disaster research since the 1970 Lubbock tornado. Its engineers are investigating ways to better construct houses and buildings for protection against severe storms. Researchers are particularly interested in mobile homes because of their light-weight construction.

James R. McDonald, director of Texas Tech's Institute for Disaster Research, said the institute's scientists have developed criteria for buildings to protect schools, hospitals and other structures from excessive wind damage.

Texas Tech researchers travel to wind-damaged sites around the world. They have examined hurricane damage in Australia, Mexico and the United States.

Texas Tech's Glass Research and Testing Laboratory is interested in reducing damage to structures caused by all natural disasters. Glass researchers work to develop economical and practical techniques of construction to minimize damage created by high winds.

One project has researchers evaluating laminated glass for use in hurricane- and earthquake-prone regions. The plastic inner layer of the glass helps keep broken glass within the window frame and away from people. Long-range goals of the glass research program include the formulation of a universal design recommendation for building codes.

SOURCES:

Richard E. Peterson, Ph.D., (806) 742-3418
Chairman of the Department of Geosciences and Professor of Atmospheric Science; for more information on the profiler system, Peterson suggests you call Andy Anderson at the National Weather Service at (806) 762-4647.

James R. McDonald, Ph.D., (806) 742-3476
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Director of the Glass Research and Testing Lab and Associate Professor of Civil Engineering

MEDIA ADVISORY
REF: 1-10-18-95
CONTACT: Josh Allen

STRENGTHENED GLASS COULD SAVE LIVES

LUBBOCK -- During severe weather, flying debris can break the glass windows of buildings and produce dangerous shards that can injure and kill people.

Texas Tech University researchers with the Glass Research and Testing Laboratory are evaluating glass strength and the effects of projectiles that strike during severe weather. They use a wind cannon to propel roof gravel, hailstones, small timber and other projectiles at glass samples. The impact is measured with an optical timing system.

The researchers have found that glass strength is reduced after environmental exposure. New glass strength is reduced 40-60 percent within a period of 15-20 years. Their work focuses on the mitigation of damage caused by strong wind and accidental explosions. To minimize window damage created by heavy winds, the researchers are developing economical and practical techniques of construction.

Following Hurricane Alicia in 1983, laboratory director H. Scott Norville participated in the examination of window glass destruction in downtown Houston. In 1989, Norville traveled to San Francisco to investigate the Northern California earthquake. Norville believes numerous deaths and injuries could have been prevented if laminated glass had been used in the windows of high-rise buildings.

In 1993, Norville assisted officials with Metro-Dade County in South Florida in testing proposed storm shutter and block wall construction standards following the devastation caused by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Norville used the wind cannon to fire projectiles at block wall and shutter targets, showing how flying objects can penetrate structures and cause serious injury. Norville's test results will be relied upon to develop new building codes in South Florida.

Norville has been studying and testing laminated, heat-strengthened and tempered glass. When building glass fractures in the aftershock of an earthquake, the inner plastic layer keeps the glass inside the window frame and off the streets and people below. The advantage of laminated glass is its inner plastic layer, he said.

The Monsanto Chemical Corp. of St. Louis, Mo., has funded research into the formulation of a comprehensive design guide for window glass.

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GRTL researchers anticipate that data regarding heat-strengthened and tempered glass may provide a rational design basis for safety glazings. In their long-range goals, they are compiling data for use in the formulation of a universal design recommendation in all building codes. GRTL associates are involved in national and international committees that are attempting to forge design recommendations for all types of window glass.

The universal design methodology will lead to safer and more consistent design of windows, said Norville.

The Texas Panhandle town of Pampa became another field laboratory site for the researchers in November 1987 when a chemical plant exploded. The blast killed three people and caused property damage within a six-mile parameter. A result of that explosion and other blasts investigated by GRTL personnel was the establishment of a blast test facility near Tahoka, Texas. At the facility, researchers are attempting to determine how window glass breaks when an explosion occurs near a structure.

SOURCE:
H. Scott Norville, Ph.D., (806) 742-1930.
Director of the Glass Research and Testing Lab and Associate Professor of Civil Engineering

MEDIA ADVISORY
REF: 1-10-18-95
CONTACT: Josh Allen

OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING RESEARCH

Scott Norville was in Philadelphia, April 19, 1995, attending a meeting about how window glass behaves under missile impact when a bomb exploded at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The next day, Norville, a Texas Tech University civil engineering professor, along with Milton L. Smith, a Texas Tech industrial engineering professor, were in Oklahoma City to study the glass damage caused by the bomb.

At the blast site, Norville was looking for the behavior of different glass types under bomb blasts. Of the types of glass Norville observed, laminated glass behaved better in resisting bomb blasts than any other glazing type.

"Laminated glass causes the least amount of damage to people and structures when it shatters. We found it to work better than glass types that were said to be stronger than steel," Norville said.

Norville is one of the leading researchers in the study of glass and damages it causes. His research is aimed at developing glazing materials which provide relative safety to personnel in buildings affected by bomb blasts and windstorms.

"We have one of the largest blast testing programs not funded by the U.S. government," Norville said. "We use it to study how glass shards travel in relation to where the bomb is located and the glass type found in the window."

Norville has been investigating window glass behavior under blast loading for nearly 12 years. He has been funded by the U.S. Navy, U.S. Corps of Army Engineers, Dupont, and Masanto to do further research on the damage glass causes when bombs detonate.

<u>SOURCE:</u>

H. Scott Norville, Ph.D., (806) 742-1930
Director of the Glass Research and Testing Lab at Texas Tech University

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MEDIA ADVISORY

TEXAS TECH
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MEDIA ADVISORY
REF: 2-10-19-95
CONTACT: Jennifer LeNoir

LUBBOCK -- The media is invited to attend a scholarship banquet scheduled for 4 p.m. Friday (Oct. 20) honoring 178 business administration student recipients in the Rotunda of the Businss Administration Building.

The recipients will receive monies totaling $54,480 supported by College of Business Administration alumni, friends, corporations and foundations. Additional guests will include parents and donors as well as faculty and staff members.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
REF: 3-10-20-95
CONTACT: Jennifer LeNoir

LUBBOCK -- The Texas Tech University library recently began participating in a new program that allows students, faculty and staff members to borrow books and other library materials from numerous other public four-year college and university libraries throughout Texas.

The statewide reciprocal borrowing agreement is a component of the TexShare Library Resource Sharing Program, sponsored by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Current students and eligible faculty and staff can request a TexShare library card from the circulation desk of the Texas Tech library. The card provides free reciprocal borrowing privileges to students, faculty and staff members at participating libraries. Card holders agree to observe the loan period and other regulations of the libraries. Borrowers also are responsible for personally returning or mailing materials back to the lending libraries.

To learn which libraries may be involved in the TexShare library card program, patrons should contact the University Library's circulation desk at (806) 742-2265.

Additional TexShare programs involve the use of the Internet to deliver electronic indexes and full-text databases, and to provide interlibrary loan transmission of periodical articles and other documents among participant libraries. Future TexShare programs will focus on ways to identify and share library resources in Texas.

Patrons may obtain the statewide library card at the circulation desk. If individuals have other questions they may contact Amy Chang, head of the access services department, at (806) 742-2489, or by email at IAAMY.

For additional information about the computerized Library Information System as well as TexShare and FirstSearch indexes and databases, individuals may call the University Library's reference desk at (806) 742-2236.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
REF: 4-10-20-95
CONTACT: Josh Allen

LUBBOCK -- Texas Tech University's Meat Judging Team topped five universities Nov. 7 to win the Eastern National Meat Judging Contest in Wyalusing, Penn.

Texas Tech won the contest by rating meat products most like the evaluation of the judges, who represent the meat industry.

Mark Miller, associate professor in the department of animal science and food technology, and Micah Butler, graduate teaching assistant in the same department, coached the team of eight Texas Tech students that won the contest held at Taylor Packing Company.

Members of the team are Michael Schertz of Krum, Texas, Laura Locke of Wharton, Texas, Jarrod Usner of Fredricksberg, Texas, Jason Belew of Tahoka, Texas, Travis Cook of Wheeler, Texas, Justin Ransom of Wichita Falls, Texas, Doug Alderson of Midland, Texas, and Scott Brown of Carrizozo, NM.

Other universities participating in the contest were Penn State University, University of Florida, Oklahoma State University and the University of Illinois.

Texas Tech's Meat Judging Team will compete in the Excel High Plains Meat Judging Contest in Plainview, Sunday (Oct. 22).

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NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
REF: A-10-17-95
CONTACT: Preston Lewis

LUBBOCK -- Some 70 potential employers will be represented at the School of Allied Health's annual job fair at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Friday, Oct. 27.

The job fair, scheduled 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday in the McInturff Conference Center of University Medical Center, will include representatives from hospitals, clinics, private firms and governmental agencies.

The job fair will focus on career opportunities in the professions taught in the TTUHSC School of Allied Health: physical therapy, occupational therapy, clinical laboratory science, emergency medicine, speech pathology and audiology.

Potential employers participating in the job fair will be available to meet with students seeking careers in the field. Prospective employers will have information available on job placement, salaries and career options.

Pre-health career students will also have an opportunity to learn about employment trends in the allied health professions, which as a whole are unable to meet the demand for new employees.

In addition to students from TTUHSC School of Allied Health and Texas Tech University, participants also are expected from Wayland Baptist University, Lubbock Christian University, South Plains College, Odessa College and Amarillo College.

More information is available by calling the Texas Tech School of Allied Health at (806) 743-3223.

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HEALTH TIPSHEET
from
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER
October 20, 1995

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS -- While jobs in some segments of the economy may be lacking, employment opportunities for those in the allied health professions are expanding.

Potential employers from some 50 hospitals, clinics, private health care firms and governmental agencies will participate in the TTUHSC School of Allied Health's annual job fair from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Friday (Oct. 27) in the McInturff Conference Center of University Medical Center.

This will be an opportunity for media to meet with varied employers to discuss employment trends in health care and to visit with students from Texas Tech and area colleges.

For more information on the job fair or to arrange interviews on employment trends in the allied health professions, contact Brenda Bobo at (806) 743-3223.

LOW FAT MAY BE BAD -- That's right, feeding children too many low-fat meals can lead to growth problems.

"In the craze to eat healthy, many parents forget that children need fat and calories to grow," said Nancy Beck, a registered dietitian in the TTUHSC Department of Pediatrics. "This doesn't mean that children should eat junk food. But it does say that parents can allow their children to have snacks."

Beck recommends that young children eat about six times a day at scheduled intervals. These snacks give children adequate calories and protein for proper growth.

"Children cannot always get all of the calories they need at mealtime alone," she said.

Good snacks for children include fruit, crackers, unsweetened cereal or yogurt. For more information, contact Beck at 743-2310.

B-10-20-95

For assistance on these or other stories, contact Sandra Pulley or Preston Lewis at TTUHSC News and Publications, (806) 743-2143.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
REF: A-10-20-95
CONTACT: Sandra Pulley or
Misty Whitwell

LUBBOCK--Nurses can earn continuing education credit for "Forensic Nursing: New Roles, New Responsibilities," a one-day seminar offered Nov. 3 through the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

The course, which is sponsored by the School of Nursing Continuing Nursing Education Program, will run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in TTUHSC Room 2C103. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m.

Course instructor Virginia A. Lynch, M.S.N., R.N., will define the role of a forensic specialist in nursing practice and describe the forensic clinical nurse specialist's unique skills that improve nursing care for trauma victims. Lynch is a forensic clinical nurse specialist with extensive experience and education in the forensic area.

Those who successfully complete the course will be awarded 8.4 contact hours from the TTUHSC School of Nursing Continuing Education Program.

The course fee is $78.

For more information, contact Shelley Burson in the School of Nursing at 743-2734.

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FOR RELEASE TUESDAY, OCT. 24
REF: C-10-20-95
CONTACT: Preston Lewis

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following release was prepared by writer Ron Kotulak and Denise M. Jones of the American Society of Anesthesiologists in advance of the society's annual meeting Oct. 21-25 in Atlanta. The Texas Tech research was one of 18 studies chosen by the society as reflecting potentially new information or current trends of public interest. The 18 studies were selected from 1,270 scientific abstracts and outlines submitted to the society for presentation at the annual meeting.)

ATLANTA -- Contrary to concerns that patients with chronic pain may be taking too much of the common painkiller acetaminophen, a study of 100 people with chronic pain revealed that they usually do not take enough of the drug to relieve their pain effectively.

"Our results indicate that despite the availability of a large number of acetaminophen-containing medications to patients with persistent chronic pain, failing to maintain therapeutic plasma concentrations may be much more common than achieving toxic concentrations," according to James E. Heavner, D.V.M., Ph.D., of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

More than 44 different drugs contain acetaminophen, Dr. Heavner reported at the annual meeting of the American Society of Anesthesiologists. The availability of acetaminophen in so many medications has raised concerns that some people may unknowingly be taking overdoses of the drug, he said.

Of the 100 people in the study, 56 percent were taking one drug containing acetaminophen and another 15 percent were taking two drugs containing the pain reliever.

None of the people had symptoms of acetaminophen toxicity, Dr. Heavner said. Blood samples showed that the level of acetaminophen was well below the toxic range, he said.

More importantly, the concentration of acetaminophen in their blood was below the effective range for pain relief in all but four patients, he said.

"Results of this study should not lead to relaxation of concerns about the potential hazards of acetaminophen overdose in people with chronic pain," Dr. Heavner said. "On the other hand, adequacy of dosing should be considered."

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GUEST EDITORIAL
SPECIAL TO THE WEST TEXAS HISPANIC NEWS
Ref: A-10-23-95
CONTACT: Sandra Pulley

INVESTING IN A CHILD'S FUTURE

by Isabel Rodriquez, R.N., B.S.N.

It only takes an hour a year to make a child's life better.

In the time it takes to watch a television show, a child can be protected from harmful diseases. In the time it takes to cook dinner, a child can take the first steps toward a healthy future.

It only takes an hour for a child to get a check-up.

And unlike many investments in a child's future, this one does not cost much. Through a program called Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT), children who are eligible for Medicaid can get free annual check-ups and dental exams. Even the cost of transportation to and from the clinic is covered.

Despite the fact that the appointments are convenient and the cost is low, many parents are not taking advantage of these free check-ups, say nurses at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. These nurses operate the Wellness Center, one of the locations offering the free medical screenings.

By taking time for a check-up now, parents can save both time and money in the future. And because check-ups can catch potential problems in the early stages, parents can take care of these problems before they become life-threatening. The exam at the Wellness Center includes both a physical and developmental exam,

Even children who look healthy should get check-ups, because some "invisible" problems can be caught during an annual examination. Studies also show that children who have regular check-ups develop healthier habits as adults. Childhood check-ups build a pattern of preventive care that continues later in life.

For parents of infants and toddlers, check-ups can catch early hearing and sight loss that could cause reading, speaking and writing difficulties during the school years. Elementary-school aged children are checked to make sure their growth and development is normal.

For teenagers, doctors and nurses can be a resource for factual information on touchy subjects, such as sex and teenage smoking. These topics are often difficult for parents to discuss with their children.

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At any age, check-ups can provide parents with the peace of mind of knowing that their child is healthy.

For more information about getting a free check-up, please call 743-2535 or go to the Department of Human Services. Parents who call the Wellness Center to get free check-ups for their children will also receive a written reminder of their appointment.

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(Isabel Rodriquez, R.N., B.S.N., is a graduate student in the School of Nursing.)