

HealthNotes

Breast cancer risk from household cleaning

Women who are fastidious about keeping their house clean and fragrant may unwittingly increase their chances of developing breast cancer, a study warned. Those who use air fresheners and sprays and foams to remove mould from bathrooms the most were more likely to get the disease, the research suggested.

Researchers asked almost 800 breast cancer patients and a group of healthy women of a similar age how often they used various cleaning products and pesticides. They found those who used

air freshener sprays were 20 per cent more likely to have developed breast cancer. Daily use raised the odds of the disease developing by 30 per cent, the journal *Environmental Health* reported.

—Daily Mail

Genetically engineered mosquito to fight malaria



Scientists have created a genetically modified mosquito that cannot pass malaria to humans. The ultimate aim is replacing wild mosquitoes with the lab-bred population — although scientists say this would take at least a decade to achieve.

Malaria infects 250 million people a year and kills more than a million of them, mainly children. Researcher Professor Michael Riehle, of the University of Arizona, said: "It's not going to be a magic bullet or eradicate malaria, but it's a new tool in our tool chest." He said previous attempts to genetically alter mosquitoes had failed to make the insects completely immune to the parasite.

—Daily Mail

Egypt denies Mubarak's health is failing

Reports about a deterioration in Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's health are false, his information minister said on Tuesday, two days after a US newspaper said Mubarak was dying of cancer.

An article in *The Washington Times* on Sunday said Mubarak was thought by most Western intelligence agencies to be suffering from terminal cancer affecting his stomach and pancreas.

Thursday, July 22, 2010

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Living Positive

Ray of hope as child Aids numbers fall

IN PERSPECTIVE

55 of the 56 HIV positive mothers who visited Ishiara Sub-district Hospital between October 2007 and early this year received the prevention of mother to child transmission services. The success is attributed to support groups. Mbeere has five comprehensive care centres where HIV positive mothers and other people get help.

were dying. They wanted me to be banished from the village," narrates Nginyo.

Nginyo, 38, who is a beneficiary of a project run by Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric Aids Foundation (EGPAF) dubbed 'Zingatia Maisha' is lucky to have known her HIV status and started treatment before her fourth pregnancy.

After the fourth child was born HIV negative, she gave birth to another healthy child one and a half years later.

EGPAF says infant Aids can be eliminated and preventing mother to child transmission is the most effective way to achieve it.

Enrolling in a support group was key to Nginyo's success in dealing with the virus that causes Aids. The group enabled her cope with her status and successfully carry her pregnan-

cies to term.

Before she started treatment and counselling she had a CD4 count of 250 and weighed 35kg. Now, her CD4 count is over 700 and she weighs 53kg.

SUPPORT GROUP

"This group helped me because we can identify with each other. They are ready to listen and understand my problems," says Nginyo.

Her husband, 35-year-old Crispus Ireri, is HIV negative, meaning they are discordant.

"Through the support group, we overcame pressure from relatives and neighbours to separate," she says.

During monthly sessions held at the Embu Provincial General Hospital compound, couples living with Aids mentor and counsel each other.

The meetings, which coin-

cide with their antenatal and mother to child health hospitals appointment, antiretrovirals are replenished as mothers and children are examined.

Many of the families in support groups have given birth to HIV free children, reinforcing the hope that it is possible to stop transmission to infants with timely interventions.

HIV POSITIVE BABIES DECLINING

The Mbeere District Aids and STD Coordinator Henry Muriithi says the number of children being born with HIV in the region is declining.

Although the region has a prevalence rate of five per cent, Muriithi says 98 per cent of mothers attending clinics access PMTCT.

"This is good news. Eventually HIV infection among children will be eliminated."