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POLLY'S POINTERS

DEAR POLLY — When I tried to make marshmallow eggs last year, I couldn't get the marshmallows out of the molds. How can I keep the marshmallow mixture from sticking to the mold? I dusted it with cornstarch as

my recipe suggested, but it was still a gooey mess. — LIZ

DEAR LIZ — Marshmallow is gooey and sticky to work with, and dusting with cornstarch does help minimize the sticking. However, I've found a better method.

Try spraying the molds with a non-stick cooking spray before dusting the molds heavily with cornstarch. This will enable you to get a thicker coat-

ing of cornstarch, and the marshmallows should be much easier to remove from the molds.

I'm sending you a copy of my newsletter "Handmade Chocolates," which features a recipe for homemade marshmallows, including directions for dipping them in melted, tempered chocolate. This newsletter also offers recipes for dark, milk and white chocolate and peanut-butter truffles, chocolate-covered caramels, cashew-caramel clusters and complete directions for tempering chocolate for candy-dipping. Others who would like a copy of this issue should send \$1 for each copy to POLLY'S POINTERS, in care of this newspaper, P.O. Box 91428, Cleveland, OH 44101-3428. Be sure to include the title. — POLLY

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FIRST AID MATTERS



When you're out of doors, it's not only more fun to have someone with you, it's the safe thing to do. A Buddy System works whether you're out for a long walk where people are scarce or swimming at a crowded beach or pool. It means someone knows where you are, and can get help if you need it. It's a good idea to encourage kids to be safety conscious and to take responsibility for each other by making sure they use the buddy system all the time.

One minor but painful affliction that a buddy can straighten out is a cramp. If the cramp is in the hand, straighten out the fingers forcibly but gently. If it's in the thigh, straighten the knee and raise the leg with one hand under the heel, and the other pressing down on the knee. If the cramp is in the foot, straighten the toes and have the victim stand on the ball of the foot.

Remember that panic is less likely to be a problem when two people are together than it is for someone alone and in trouble. Besides unbalancing your ability to think, panic can add to physical problems by making you sweat. That reduces body heat and adds to the possibility of dehydration.

So just make it a family habit to use the buddy system at all times and watch it pay dividends in increased peace-of-mind and safety.

DEAR MEG



Meg Whitcomb

Turkey debate is for the birds

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — Please give me a verdict on our turkey fight.

I ordered a turkey at the A&P to be picked up the day before Thanksgiving. My husband offered to pick it up so I wouldn't have to get off from work. When I got home there was this beautiful fresh turkey in the refrigerator, but it was not the one I ordered. Turns out Ted went to the village butcher instead of the A&P and got mad when the butcher said he didn't have one on order for us, so he gave Ted somebody else's turkey to keep him quiet.

That night my friend Berta called and said, "The butcher gave you my turkey, and I want it back." I apologized and said, "OK, but I've already stuffed it." Then Ted got on the other line and told her to go to the A&P because it's open until nine. But Berta said she didn't want a frozen turkey, she wanted her turkey with her stuffing. So I got in the car, took it over to her and bought a frozen bird on the way home.

Ted was mad all of Thanksgiving Day and ruined the holiday for everyone. (But the turkey was delicious!) Tell me, Meg, who was right and who was wrong? — TURKEY TROT IN KENTUCKY.

DEAR TURKEY — You were right to give the bird back to Berta. Ted was wrong because he went to the wrong place, and the butcher should have come up with another turkey for her. But Ted was the real turkey for making such a scene. I hope you had roast beef for Christmas!

DEAR MEG — I'm 32. My best friend has a 17-year-old son (I'll call him John) who's my lover. In spite of what you may think, he's very mature for his age. I've known him since he was a child and was like an aunt to him until last year. One night when we were alone together we did a lot of talking. You can guess where we ended up.

The next day I couldn't look at him, but he was eager to start a relationship, so we did.

Last week I saw John coming out of a disco with a pretty blond teenager. I'm writing because I can't confide in my best friend — she's his mother. Should I break off with John? I don't want to, but I'm afraid I'm going to lose him, and I'd rather do the breaking up than wait for him to do it. — DEBBIE, N.Y.

DEAR DEBBIE — Then do it. Your chances of hanging onto this relationship are about as good as an iceberg's in Hades. Get out now.

DEAR MEG — The woman up the street is an exhibitionist. Every Wednesday night there are five or six men in front of her house for the show, and one of them is my husband. I saw her once, and that was enough. She's a gorgeous redhead who undresses languidly in front of her second-story window as if she knows she has an audience. I'm furious that any woman would act like that. It's unladylike and indecent.

The reason no one complains to the police is that they're too busy enjoying the show. If a man went around exposing himself, I'll bet he'd be reported in no time flat. Should I report this dame to the authorities? Or do you know of another way I could get my husband to quit watching the free show? — FURIOUS NEIGHBOR, WIS.

DEAR FURIOUS — What the gorgeous redhead does in her bedroom, languidly or not, is her own business.

DEAR MEG — I'm a successful career woman who is 41 years old. Although I've always been considered beautiful, I've never been married nor have I had children. I've just had to undergo a hysterectomy, and I'm now in a profound depression.

Maybe this is caused by the fact that I can never have children. I'm not even dating anyone right now, but I would love to get married. Somehow my feelings about being alone seem to be connected with the hysterectomy. Is it normal to become depressed after that kind of surgery? — CAN'T HAVE IT ALL, MO.

DEAR CAN'T — Yes. Depression is a common result of hysterectomy. You should discuss hormone-replacement therapy with your doctor, if you haven't already.

Then, too, the urge to have children is a very basic one. Knowing you can no longer have a baby could trigger feelings of grief and loss.

DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

It's time to try the low-cost diet

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

A New York City doctor has written a diet book that prominent scientists say isn't worth the paper it's printed on.

It's a best-seller. No reputable physician endorses the author's view that an astonishing miscellany of illnesses is caused by diet-correctible malfunctions in our immune systems. Nonetheless, people are snapping up the book with the same enthusiasm that they snatch cashews out of a bowl of mixed nuts. (It's easy: You simply shake the bowl and the cashews, being larger than the other nuts, migrate to the surface.) Anyway, the doctor is not only receiving handsome royalties from his fad diet; he also demands exorbitant office fees from fat people who are convinced that all their sorrows will evaporate if they become thin without counting calories. The diet doctor drives a Rolls-Royce. To me, that says a lot.

Apparently, if your life's goal is to make a great deal of money in the shortest time, the way to do it is to write a book on dieting. Remember, however, that you are not supposed to write a real diet book. It won't sell.

According to Dr. Gabe Mirkin, associate professor of pediatrics at Georgetown University, "The diets that sell well are those that promote something for nothing." Such get-rich-quick schemes include Dr. Berger's Immune Power Diet, The I-Like-My-Bear-Diet, Laugh Off the Pounds, the Herbalife diet, How to Flip Your Flab Forever, the United States of America diet, Mind Over Fatter, the Fit For Life diet, the Rice Diet, and More of Jesus, Less of Me.

From a nutritional standpoint, these fad diets — like others before them — are medically hard to swallow. They are either unhealthful, unproven or misrepresentative of current scientific knowledge. They can be dangerous. People died from the liquid-protein Last Chance Diet. Mirkin observes that "the diet kings are doing Americans a terrible injustice — they're setting them up for regaining any weight they may lose. And every time they rapidly put the weight back on, they lay down arterial plaque at an accelerated rate and increase the number of fat cells in their bodies."

One fact is certain: Every pound that a patient sheds is a dollar in the pocket of the author. When asked why he chose to publish a sensationalistic diet book, Robert Haas (author of "Eat to Win") explained that "the original manuscript bears no resemblance to what you see in the book." The publisher was not interested in marketing a valid scientific manual. "I really didn't like this approach," Haas admitted. "My agent clued me in to the realities of life... You either say yes, or you say no and the book does not get published."

I think it's sad that the public is so willing to take chances on health. Fad diets pander to an increasingly prevalent American obsession: the belief that given the right magic, anybody can beat the laws of physics. Nutritional experts have repeatedly and reliably shown that about 80 percent of body mass is governed by genetic factors; in order to lose weight, the dieter must decrease caloric intake or increase caloric expenditure (or both). In short, you have to eat less and exercise more.

Almost any diet will promote weight loss. The trick is to keep the weight off. Fad diets are often high in fat and artificial nutrients and deficient in vitamins and minerals. Therefore, even while on such a diet, a person may be endangering his or her health. Furthermore, these diets are often impossible to follow for any length of time. The initial weight that is proudly lost usually returns embarrassingly (and inexorably) as the dieter discovers that quick answers do not mean sustained cures. Dr. Richard Friedman, director of the University of Wisconsin weight-reduction clinic, says that "basically, 85 to 90 percent of all people who go on any weight-loss program gain back all the weight within two years."

The Scarsdale, Pritikin, Atkins and Simmons diets have come and gone. So will the plethora of today's diet scams. What is left is not a generation of slim-and-trim duckets, but a new class of affluent hucksters who have made instant fortunes by promising the impossible.

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