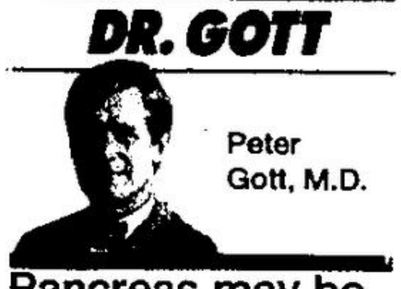
DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

Pancreas may be cause of problem

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT — For several years I have been absolutely ravenous for carbohydrates, especially in the morning. I understand that a brain chemical, neuropeptide Y, might be responsible. Could you give me more information on this?

DEAR READER — I am not aware of any brain neuropeptide that has been shown to govern carbohydrate craving.

Carbohydrates are branch-chained collections of sugar subunits. That is, all starches are composed of basic sugar molecules strung together like beads in a necklace. Glucose is the most common six-carbon compound in all carbohydrates, although galactose, fructose and mannose also combine in various combinations to form starch. For example, when glucose is attached to fructose, table sugar (sucrose) is formed. If glucose and galactose are combined, milk sugar (lactose) results.

Glucose has been termed the carbohydrate "currency" of the human body. In the intestinal tract, all starches are converted to glucose before being absorbed into the bloodstream and used for energy. This process of digestion starts with saliva that attacks starch, then proceeds in the upper intestine under the control of other digestive enzymes.

Although many body chemicals *regulate carbohydrate metabolism*, insulin is probably the most important. It enables muscle, liver, brain and fat cells to absorb the glucose molecules floating in the blood. Therefore, carbohydrate craving is usually due to chemical reactions involving insulin.

Check with your doctor to discover the cause of your need for carbohydrates. If there is a problem, the fault, dear reader, is not in our brains, but in our pancreas glands.

DEAR DR. GOTT — Three years ago I had a cervical fusion. A bone chip fell into my spinal cord, leaving me paralyzed. I can now walk to some extent and have partial use of my left hand. If the chip were removed, would my problems be over?

DEAR READER — Possibly. This is a complicated issue, something like hitting a malfunctioning telephone switchboard with a hammer and then trying to determine what role the hammer played.

Operations on the neck (cervical spine) are tricky and complications can be difficult to diagnose and treat. Your paralysis could be due to the original condition for which you had surgery or to the consequences of the operation itself. Unquestionably, a bone chip that is out of place could cause your symptoms. However, before re-operating, a neurosurgeon would insist on testing you thoroughly to make sure. If the bone chip is pressing on the spinal nerves and causing paralysis, its removal could be beneficial, even curative.

I recommend that you ask for a referral to a neurosurgical clinic at a university hospital. In this setting, specialists have both the experience and the testing devices to analyze your problem and, if appropriate, to treat it.

If you have questions about HIATAL HERNIA, you can get answers in Dr. Gott's new Health Report on the subject. Send $1 and your name and address to P.O. Box 91369, Cleveland, OH 44101-3369. Be sure to ask for the Health Report on Hiatal Hernia.

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Ask about anesthesia

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT — I had a cerebral angiogram, for which I was under general anesthesia for an hour and a half. Is this normal procedure?

DEAR READER — No, an hour and a half is more time than an uncomplicated cerebral angiogram should require. This is not to suggest that your doctors were inexperienced or in error. Some procedures take longer than "normal" if they are technically more difficult or if unforeseen problems arise. Your doctor may have been especially cautious and your case more difficult than the average.

Ask the doctor why you were under anesthesia so long. I am sure he or she will give you a satisfactory answer.

DEAR DR. GOTT — Is it possible to get worms from pets? I had a cat that had a tapeworm. Ever since, my abdomen has been distended and painful, and I have no energy. My blood pressure is low and I'm losing weight, but mostly I have a wriggling sensation inside. It's almost like the first stirring of life in a pregnancy, but I'm not expecting. What should I do?

DEAR READER — Get a stool analysis for worms. Tapeworms from cats can be spread to humans by finger-to-mouth contact when the parasite's eggs are present in soil and are inadvertently ingested. I doubt that your symptoms are due to tapeworm, because we are usually not aware of tapeworm infestation until anemia develops. You have to look for other factors to explain your distension, loss of energy, low blood pressure and wriggling sensations. Nonetheless, stool analysis is in order.

DEAR DR. GOTT — I've read that if a beta-blocker (Tenormin) and a calcium-channel blocker (Procardia) are taken together, heart failure could result. Is this true? If so, why?

DEAR READER — The real problem is not so much the combination of drugs as the effects of the beta-blocker. Tenormin does depress vigorous contraction of heart muscle and, with time, some patients will experience fluid overload (congestive heart failure) as a result. Calcium-channel blockers do not have this complication.

The two drugs usually can be taken together; however, the manufacturer of Procardia does advise that in rare cases, for unknown reasons, the drugs may enhance Tenormin's tendency to cause heart failure.

In my experience, the use of both medicines simultaneously is seldom warranted. One or the other, in sufficient dose, is usually preferable. When patients taking Tenormin develop heart failure, I change to another drug or add a diuretic (kidney stimulant) to rid the body of excess water.

Be informed about prescription drugs: Send for Dr. Gott's new Health Report, CONSUMER TIPS ON MEDICINES. For your copy, send $1 and your name and address to P.O. Box 91369, Cleveland, OH 44101-3369. Be sure to mention the title.

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BRIDGE

James Jacoby

NORTH 10-19-87
♠ K 6
♥ Q J 4 3
♦ K 5
♣ K J 6 4 3

WEST
♠ 10 8 7
♥ A 9 5
♦ 10 8 2
♣ A 10 8 2

EAST
♠ Q 5 4
♥ 8 7 6
♦ A Q J 9 7 3
♣ Q

SOUTH
♠ A J 9 3 2
♥ K 10 2
♦ 8 4
♣ 9 7 5

Vulnerable: Both
Dealer: North

West	North	East	South
	1 ♠	1 ♦	1 ♠
2 ♦	Pass	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening lead: ♦ 2

Crushing defense

By James Jacoby

It's great fun to defend a hand well. Afterward you mentally congratulate yourself; then you and partner congratulate each other. East made a good decision to defend two spades, since it was tempting to bid three diamonds (a contract with little or no chance). Watch how careful defense took every trick not nailed down.

When declarer rose with dummy's king of diamonds at trick one, East won the ace and returned his lone queen of clubs. West took the ace and returned the club *10*. East ruffed and returned a heart, following the dictates of suit preference. (The play of the club 10 suggested an entry in hearts in the West hand.) West won that ace and gave partner another ruff with the two of clubs.

The defenders now had five tricks, and another diamond would be the setting trick. If that trick was won by East, that would be the last trick for the defense. But what if West could win the diamond? East could see a possible advantage to that, so he now led a low diamond. West won the diamond 10 and played back still another club, ruffed by East's queen. Although declarer could overruff with the ace, the 10-8-7 of spades now took another trick to net 200 for the defense for a two-trick set.

How could East know to underlead his Q-J of diamonds? Having supported diamonds, West would not have led low unless he had as much as the 10 of diamonds. With 8-4-2, for example, he would have led the *eight*.

A new book by James Jacoby and his father, the late Oswald Jacoby, is now available at bookstores. It is "Jacoby on Card Games," published by Pharos Books.

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