

Outlook on Lifestyle

DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

Sudden change upsets digestion

DEAR DR. GOTT: My husband and I are vegetarians for moral reasons. We are careful about our nutritional requirements. I have a 3-year-old son from a previous marriage. He is with us four weeks, then with his father one week. Perhaps out of spite, my ex-husband pumps him full of hamburgers, hot dogs, white sugar and no vegetables during the boy's visit. While I'm not concerned about my son eating meat (he can make that decision on his own when he's older), he does

have problems being unable to move his bowels for days after returning home.

My "ex" will not listen to me at all. Perhaps if you explain medically the trauma my son's digestive tract goes through every five weeks, he will try and help his son by at least giving him fruits and vegetables.

DEAR READER: Vegetarianism is more a question of preference than of medical necessity. Clearly, Americans eat too much red meat and saturated fat. We would probably be a healthier nation if we ate more vegetables and grain. However, a strictly vegetarian diet is not necessary for good health.

Most people adapt to their diets. Bowel problems, such as diarrhea and constipation, can appear when diets are suddenly changed without the body being given an opportunity to adjust. Evidently, this is what is happening to your son when he is repeatedly changed from a high-fiber diet to

low-fiber foods.

Since children are often misused as pawns in divorce situations (and sometimes long after), you probably won't get anywhere trying to convince your ex-husband of the pure health (or moral) benefits of vegetarianism. However, I think that he might respond to the observation that your son is physically uncomfortable when his digestive tract is denied the roughage to which it is accustomed. I think that any reasonable adult would want his child to eat a balanced diet, including vegetables and fruit. Try a reasoned approach based on the fact that your son is having difficulty assimilating divergent diets.

If your ex-husband truly refuses to listen to you, perhaps he would be willing to sit down with the boy's pediatrician and discuss the child's nutritional needs. You might also consider sending along a bag of fresh fruit with your son when he goes to visit.

POLLY'S POINTERS



Polly Fisher

Gentle bleach for a stained sweater

By Polly Fisher

DEAR POLLY — Last summer I washed my heavy white sweater and spread it on a big white towel in the sun to dry. The sun turned it yellow and streaked it. Can you tell me how to bring this sweater back to white again? — M.E.S.

DEAR M.E.S. — No guarantees (there never are any when you're talking about stain removal!), but here's a gentle bleaching formula that might help.

Dissolve 2 tablespoons cream of tartar in 1 gallon hot water, then let mixture cool. Soak the sweater for an hour, then wash as usual. Air-dry (obviously not in the sun!) or tumble-dry on the no-heat setting of your automatic dryer.

DEAR MEG



Meg Whitcomb

Sleep problem hounds newlywed

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — Please tell me what to do before I expire from sheer exhaustion. My husband's sister gave us an adorable pup for a wedding present. He's 4 months old and is pretty well house-trained, but that's not the problem.

The problem is, Doug lets him sleep on our bed, and he's never still. He's on and off the bed, scratching and digging at the covers until I think I'll go insane. In the five months we've been married, I'll bet I've averaged less than four hours of sleep a night. I feel lousy every morning.

Doug is crazy about the dog, but

what about me? — NEEDS EIGHT, MONTEREY, CALIF.

DEAR NEEDS — Speak up! Letting a dog determine how you're going to feel when you get up in the morning doesn't make any sense.

The pooch belongs in a bed of his own or in another room. Only the most uncaring husband wouldn't sympathize.

DEAR MEG — Elliot and I have been dating for six months. He asked me to marry him, and I accepted. But when I tried to set a date for the wedding, Elliot said we needed more time to get to know each other.

Elliot is divorced — so am I — and he says when he marries again, it's going to be forever.

Then last week he told me it isn't necessary for us to be together all the time to be in love. He set up a sched-

ule — only two evenings together during the week. On the other three nights he calls, and we talk for a couple of hours.

I don't get it. If we need time to get to know each other, why has he cut back on the number of times we see each other? — PUZZLED, TERRE HAUTE, IND.

DEAR PUZZLED — Elliot is developing a severe case of entrapment anxiety. The mixed messages he's sending you reflect his fear of getting in over his head.

The best way to deal with this is to out-distance him. Don't be so available. Follow your own schedule, not his. Don't sit home waiting for the phone. Let him chase you until you catch him.

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