

Outlook on Lifestyle

DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

Preparing for childbirth

DEAR DR. GOTT: We are expecting a baby soon. Can you suggest a few good books on child care the natural way?

DEAR READER: I am not sure what you mean by "child care the natural way." There are several excellent resources on natural childbirth. Child care per se is a highly individualized matter, about which several texts have been written.

These two subjects are well covered in the following books:

— "What to Expect When You're Expecting," by Arlene Eisenberg et al., and "What to Eat When You're Expecting," by Arlene Eisenberg et al., both published by Workman Publishing, New York;

— "What Every Baby Knows" (and other titles) by T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. (Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass.);

— "Dr. Balter's Child Sense," by Lawrence Balter, M.D. (Poseidon Press, New York).

Ask your obstetrician and pediatrician for their recommendations as well.

DEAR DR. GOTT: The doctor says my son's temper outbursts are due to Klinefelter's syndrome and says it's

my fault because I was 39 when the boy was born. Is this true?

DEAR READER: Each human child is normally born with a pair of sex-differentiation chromosomes: XX for female, XY for male. Klinefelter's syndrome refers to a relatively common (one in every 700 births) chromosome abnormality in which an extra "female" chromosome is present (XXY).

Most affected males are normal in appearance and intellect, but are sterile. The typical individual is tall, with underdeveloped testicles and a tendency to breast enlargement. Many Klinefelter's patients show specific deficits in verbal I.Q., reading and use of speech. This can be improved by speech and language therapy. Some affected boys are retarded. Temper outbursts are not usual in Klinefelter's syndrome, although such behavioral abnormalities are common in a related condition called the XYY syndrome.

In any case, I think that your doctor was insensitive to place blame on you for your son's chromosomal abnormality. While it's true that the older the age at pregnancy, the more risk for inherited abnormalities in the child, the doctor unfairly placed a burden on you. Younger women also give birth to babies with a variety of genetic disorders.

I do not believe that you are at fault. Rather than feeling guilty about your son's problem, make sure that he is given the opportunity to receive special training. This will certainly include a pediatrician, speech therapist, additional help in school, and psychological counseling as needed.

Don't let your doctor throw up his hands and mainstream your youngster when the child could be helped by professional guidance. If you can't get the help you need from him perhaps you should a different doctor. I'm sending you a copy of my Health Report, CHOOSING A PHYSICIAN: MAKE A DECISION FOR GOOD HEALTH, which may help you. Other readers who want a copy should send

\$1 and their name and address to P.O. Box 91369, Cleveland, OH 44101-3369. Be sure to mention the title.

DEAR READER: The symptoms you describe are common after head injuries in automobiles and should clear up within a year. Although you

DEAR DR. GOTT: I had nerve damage to my forehead in a car accident. There is still swelling, numbness and tingling six months later. Should I see a specialist?

should certainly check with a doctor, examination by a specialist is probably not necessary unless your doctor requests it.

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