

Outlook on Lifestyle

DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

Flying can cause ear problems

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT: What's the best way to avoid ear problems when flying? The last time I flew, my ears were painfully blocked for two weeks afterward.

DEAR READER: Ear pain develops when air cannot move into (or out of) the middle-ear chamber during changes in pressure. When you are starting a commercial flight and the cabin is pressurized, the air pressure is actually lowered; the air in the middle ear expands and exits through the narrow eustachian tubes, causing a pop. Air will escape in this manner until the middle-ear pressure is equal to cabin pressure. Ordinarily, people

have no difficulty at this stage.

On the other hand, during the descent of the aircraft, cabin pressure increases as the plane approaches sea level. During this phase, air must rush into the middle-ear chambers through the eustachian tubes (with a pop) to balance the increasing external air pressure. Air tends to enter the middle ear with more difficulty than it leaves. Therefore, passengers usually will have much more trouble clearing their ears on descent than on ascent. If the pressure cannot be equalized, the eardrum is forced inward — actually sucked in by the vacuum that is created — and a person will experience pain, ringing and hearing loss.

When this happens, a Valsalva maneuver is helpful: pinch your nose shut and give a strong blow, like blowing up a balloon. This forces air from the mouth through the eustachian tubes into the middle-ear chambers, thereby equalizing the cabin pressure.

Doctors strongly advise patients with upper respiratory infections, colds and acute allergies to avoid flying if at all possible, because these conditions cause tissue swelling that can block air from entering the middle ear. Ear pain and loss of hearing can be serious consequences in the imprudent passenger who chooses to fly with nasal congestion. For other travelers, the Valsalva maneuver may not be necessary. Yawning or swallowing usually will open the eustachian tubes enough to let air in.

To give you more information on ears, I'm sending you a free copy of my Health Report, "Ear Infections and Disorders." 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 DR. GOTT: During a locker-room conversation, one man described a friend's sexual prowess as having a "white liver," because he was able to perform every 15 to 20 minutes. Have you ever heard this expression?

DEAR READER: No, I haven't — nor have I ever heard of a man who was able to perform "every 15 to 20 minutes." I think that this is locker-room braggadocio. For some inane reason, certain men think they are macho if they can achieve multiple orgasms. This does not necessarily make for a satisfactory performance. In fact, the expert lover usually tries to get it right the first time. Exercise profound skepticism about most men's claims to sexual prowess, especially when such claims are made to the other guys in a locker room.

DEAR MEG



Meg Whitcomb

Is her husband really unfaithful?

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — One of my best friends moved back into the area six months ago. Rita took an apartment next door to where a barmaid friend of my husband lives.

One night, Rita came over when Carl was out. She asked if Carl had a relative in her building, because she'd seen him there a number of times. I said no, and she dropped the subject.

I used to think Carl was fooling around with the barmaid, but he denied seeing her anywhere other than at the bar. I believed him.

Now I'm furious, but I'm holding it in. How do I confront Carl without involving Rita? — FRIEND OF A FRIEND, UTICA, N.Y.

DEAR FRIEND — Why not involve Rita? She's already up to her chin trying to muddy the waters with insinuations about Carl. Since she's supposed to be a friend, she should be prepared to back them up.

But start with Carl. Try: "Rita says she's seen you in so-and-so's building, and I think we should talk about it." He should have the chance to tell his side of the story — if there is one.

DEAR MEG — Three years ago, a close friend and fraternity brother borrowed some money from me. I wanted to help him out because he was working two jobs and needed money for the down payment on a condo. I didn't ask for anything in writing because I thought it would sound insulting.

Now he's married and has a family (and a new condo), but he hasn't paid me a cent. When I ask him what he plans to do about paying me back, he says he "can't just now" or looks hurt. I don't want to alienate the guy, but I want what's due me. I'd hate to lose a good friend because of a misunder-

standing over money. — J.K., MONTREAL

DEAR J.K. — This is no "misunderstanding." The guy owes you money, and he's not paying up.

Your story is a perfect example of what happens when a person loans money without anything on paper. A loan to a friend or family member should be treated exactly like a loan from a bank, interest and all.

You're not going to see your money unless you get tough. Tell your friend if he doesn't repay you in a given amount of time, you'll have to see a lawyer.

Is your significant other right for you? Meg's booklet "LOVE: Is It the Real Thing?" will help you decide. Send \$1 to DEAR MEG, in care of this newspaper, P.O. Box 91428, Cleveland, OH 44101-3428.

Write to Meg in care of this newspaper. Meg can only answer letters that contain a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Questions of general interest will be discussed in future columns.

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DEAR POLLY — My grape jelly didn't jell this year, so I am using the resulting jelly-like substance to sweeten ever so many wonderful dishes. I store it in small glasses capped with paraffin. Now I pour it into my mince-pie preparation (stir it in before placing the ingredients into the

pie. I add it to my punch recipe, my cherry gelatin recipe that called for one cup of Seven-Up for half of the liquid, and a recipe for sugar cookies that I wished to color pink. The fun results are limitless. I must do this again! — MARJORIE

crust), add it to my canned peaches that need to be just a "bit" more sweet, and mix it in with my sugar and cornstarch for a glaze strawberry

DEAR MARJORIE — Thanks for a marvelously inspiring letter that proves there are few kitchen failures that aren't really blessings if you use a little imagination and creativity!

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POLLY'S POINTERS



Polly Fisher

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