

Outlook on Lifestyle

DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

Medication for heart problem

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT: My question concerns drugs used in the treatment of

mitral valve prolapse. I have this condition, as do several friends. Only one friend takes medicine: Inderal, when she has a problem. I have to take Corgard daily. If I don't, I faint frequently, have chest pains and arrhythmia. What's the difference?

DEAR READER: Mitral valve prolapse is a common condition in adult women and is marked by a loosening or floppiness of a portion of the mitral valve in the heart. This causes a clicking sound or a murmur.

In some patients, MVP is associated with recurrent attacks of rapid heart rate. This is usually an annoying nuisance that stops as abruptly as it begins. In older patients, however, this rapid pulse can lead to angina, a characteristic sensation of chest pres-

sure or pain indicating that the heart muscle is not receiving enough oxygen.

Many patients feel more comfortable taking medicine that will prevent the fast-heart episodes of MVP. One of the most effective classes of drugs for this purpose is the beta-blockers, medicines to interrupt the cycle of nerve impulses that run the heart too fast. Inderal was the first beta-blocker to be marketed. Others have been developed, Corgard being one. You and your friend are taking similar medicines. However, you seem to require yours on a more regular basis, perhaps because your tendency to fast-pulse is more severe.

To give you more general information, I'm sending you a free copy of my Health Report, "Consumer Tips

on Medicine." Other readers who would like 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: I've seen advertisements that claim individuals can increase their height by two to four inches by following an exercise program designed to straighten the spine. Is there any validity to these claims?

DEAR READER: I'm afraid not. You cannot increase the height of a fully grown spine by exercising. On the other hand, we are all aware that some people slouch and have poor

posture. These folks could certainly be helped by exercises designed to make them stand straight. The thrust of the advertisements you mention is to give cruel hope to people with spinal abnormalities, particularly the elderly who may have osteoporosis or the normal shortening tendency that comes with age.

Most people will gain height by standing straighter and throwing their shoulders back. Those with backbone problems would be better off seeking medical advice and treatment.

DEAR MEG



Meg Whitcomb

He doesn't want wife's MTV

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — I'm losing my wife to the video business.

We're both 44, and she's gone into a second childhood. She can sit for hours zapping back and forth from MTV to VH-1. She knows all the hit videos, and, if she doesn't like one, she zaps to another channel.

She's wild about "I Want Your Sex" (George Michael), "Hot Hot Hot" (Buster Poindexter) and "The Man in the Mirror" (Michael Jackson.) The whole thing is like a compulsion with her.

Even our kids weren't this bad, so I thought when they went away to school we'd have some peace and quiet for a change. But Tawne is worse than they ever were. Her classical al-

bums and the folk music from our generation are collecting dust while she watches hoodlums like George Michael and John Cougar Mellencamp.

I'm at a loss. Is this a mid-life crisis or what? — SOUR NOTE, VALLEY COTTAGE, N.Y.

DEAR SOUR — Sounds like it. Or maybe the empty-nest syndrome is getting to Tawne. She could be reverting to her second childhood in an effort to stave off the loneliness and feelings of aging that your kids' departure have produced. Her fixation on rock video sounds like a fate worse than deaf to me.

How about trying to wean her off her addiction with an adult re-education program? Try treating her to dinner and a movie or a "your generation" concert. You may be surprised at how quickly a little TLC from you will replace MTV in your lives — and ear drums.

DEAR MEG — Rick and I have been married six years. Two years ago, when I was pregnant with our first child, Rick went out with a hooker. He confessed it to me, but, even so, the news crushed me. He promised he would never do it again, and I trusted him.

Well, a few months later he did it again. There have been a total of five since then. I found out about the last one when I discovered evidence in

Rick's car

I don't trust Rick anymore, and I really hate sex now. But he doesn't understand why. When he comes home, all he wants is sex. Sometimes he'll phone me and ask if I'm "in the mood." If I'm not, he doesn't bother to come home.

Rick says I'd forgive and forget if I really loved him. But how can I forgive him when he's made the same mistake over and over again? — DISTRESSED, MICHIGAN

DEAR DISTRESSED — You can forgive Rick only because he sounds as if he's in the grip of sexually destructive behavior he's unable to control. But that doesn't mean you should continue to be a victim of his obsession. It's demeaning and demoralizing. And his being hooked on hookers could be dangerous to your health, too.

Draw the line. Either Rick gets help or he gets out. His addiction to sex has nothing to do with love. It has to do with his own self-hate. Good luck and keep me posted.

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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POLLY'S POINTERS



Polly Fisher

Indulge your taste for juicy melons

By Polly Fisher

DEAR POLLY — How nutritious are melons? They're my favorite fruit. We eat a lot of watermelon and cantaloupe. — KAREN

DEAR KAREN — All melons contain some vitamins, but cantaloupes are the superior choice nutrition-wise. They're a real nutritional bargain. A quarter of an average-size melon contains about 80 percent of the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance for vitamin A and 70 percent of the day's RDA for vitamin C at a cost of only 40 calories. It contains minerals and is a good source of water, too.

Honeydew and watermelon contain about one-third or more of the RDA for vitamin C per cup of cut-up melon. Watermelon also contains significant amounts of vitamin A.

So, indulge your love of melons throughout the season. They're a real treat, and they provide a nutritional boost — especially important for kids who may eat a limited quantity of vitamin-rich vegetables. Enjoy! — POLLY

DEAR POLLY — Use a pressing mitt (available in sewing supply stores) to iron creases out of draperies after they've been hung. Slip the mitt on one hand and hold it in back of the area to be pressed. Iron with the other hand.

Keep an embroidery hoop in the laundry room to hold fabrics taut when you need to remove spots and stains.

Old nylon stockings are useful for tying up old newspapers and shrubbery. — GAYLE

Are there picky eaters in your house? Fortify the foods they love by adding "sneaky" ingredients that will nourish them without destroying the good taste of their favorite foods. For ideas and recipes, order Polly's newsletter "Nutrition Boosters." Send \$1 for each copy to POLLY'S POINTERS, in care of this newspaper, P.O. Box 91363, Cleveland, OH 44101-3363. Be sure to include the title.

DEAR POLLY — How do I know when my potatoes are ready to dig up? — F.K.

DEAR F.K. — You can start looking for new potatoes when the vines are large, growing vigorously, and starting to flower. I cautiously dig around the perimeter of a plant, carefully looking for harvestable potatoes (I like them at least golf-ball size) without disturbing smaller, developing potatoes or the roots of the plant. These little new potatoes are delicious simply steamed or boiled and served with butter and perhaps a generous sprinkling of fresh herbs such as dill or rosemary. What a treat!

If you're harvesting your potatoes with the idea of storing them for a few months, let the plants die down naturally before you dig the potatoes. Then they will be fully mature and can be stored the longest and most successfully. When digging potatoes, be careful not to cut or spear any of them. A potato with skin you have broken should be eaten soon and not stored, since it will spoil and rot more easily. — POLLY

DEAR POLLY — To remove the adhesive residue from nonskid strips in the bathtub, rub lightly with nail polish remover and a nylon or plastic scrubber. — ANDY

Preserve the harvest the quick-and-easy way in your freezer. Complete freezing directions for the most popular fruits and vegetables, along with special hints and pointers, are found in Polly's newsletter "Freezing Fruits and Vegetables." Send \$1 for each copy to POLLY'S POINTERS, in care of this newspaper, P.O. Box 91363, Cleveland, OH 44101-3363. Be sure to include the title.

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