

Outlook on Lifestyle

DR. GOTT



Peter
Gott, M.D.

Treatment of tissue virus

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT: Could you tell me about HPV (human papovavirus)? I'm being treated with Efudex (5 percent). My doctor tells me this virus is new or newly diagnosed.

DEAR READER: Papovavirus is one of a group of viruses that can infect human tissues. The virus is believed to be the cause of common warts.

In some instances, papovaviruses can cause cancer and other serious diseases. For example, patients whose immune systems are depressed

may develop a rare neurological disease called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy, an untreatable condition marked by rapid nerve malfunction leading to weakness, dementia and death. However, most people with papovavirus infection simply suffer from benign warts — both regular and venereal — that are a cosmetic nuisance spread by human-to-human contact. Diagnosis is made by the appearance of the warts or by biopsy.

Interferon, an antiviral drug, has

been used successfully in treating certain papovavirus infections. Efudex (fluorouracil) liquid or cream is helpful therapy for certain skin cancers, such as actinic (sun-induced) keratoses. If your skin cancers are caused by papovavirus infection, Efudex may eliminate the growths without the necessity of surgery.

To give you more information, I am sending you a free copy of my Health Report, "What You Should Know About Skin Cancer." 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 have dark skin, enjoy outdoor activities and tan easily, but the last three years I've developed a puzzling problem. When in the sun for even half an hour, I break out in little bumps under the skin. They itch terribly and last for several days. I use sunscreen and take no medication. What causes this problem?

DEAR READER: You seem to have developed extreme sensitivity to sunlight. This is an allergy in which solar rays cause release of histamine in your skin, resulting in hives and itching. You may be helped by taking an antihistamine to neutralize the reaction in your skin.

On the other hand, I have seen patients experience swelling and itching from some brands of sunscreen. Therefore, I believe that you should seek a consultation with an allergist or a dermatologist. Either specialist will be able to identify the source of your problem and suggest treatment.

Obviously, until the cause of your ailment is discovered, you will want to avoid direct sunlight and the use of sunscreen preparations.

DEAR MEG



Meg
Whitcomb

'True love' might just be infatuation

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — For 17 years, I have loved a man from a distance.

It was love at first sight, but I was only 16 when we met — too young to settle into anything serious. He left for an out-of-state college, and we lost touch.

We are both married to other people now, but two months ago, we happened to meet for the first time in years. Since then, we have kept in touch by phone.

He says he still loves me and that he doesn't love his wife. I love him more than I love my husband, and the love keeps growing and growing.

But telephone calls aren't enough. I want to reach out and touch him. Do you think it would be foolish to follow my heart and go to him? — LONG-LOST LOVE, PITTSBURGH, PA.

DEAR LONG-LOST — Love at first sight often turns out to be infatuation at second glance. Since you've never had a chance to test your crush against the sober realities of day-to-day life, "going to him" now would be foolish.

First, you owe yourself and your husband an examination of what's haywire in your relationship. Second, don't count on your long-distance love being there for you if you suddenly appear. The phone connection could be all he can handle. Most married men who say they don't love their wives rarely walk out on them forever.

You'd do better dealing with the facts of your real life instead of the fantasies you're indulging in.

DEAR MEG — Two years ago, our daughter married Jim, and they moved in with us.

My husband Ron and Jim became buddies on the spot, and spent most of their time together in local bars. My daughter got fed up, and the marriage fell apart. Ron was furious when I said Jim would have to move out. He said if Jim left, he'd leave, too. And he did.

Ron moved in with our son and his wife, but they wouldn't take Jim. Finally, Jim left town, and Ron asked if he could come home. I said yes.

We got along fine until Jim reappeared on the scene. Right away, they were back in the bars. This time, my husband lost his job because of absenteeism. (They both drink like fish.)

I wonder if the two of them are gay. Another thing, Jim doesn't go out with other women anymore. The two just go out by themselves.

What should I do? — LEFT OUT, HARTFORD, CONN.

DEAR LEFT — Rather than homosexuality, I suspect the culprit is booze. Ron and Jim are drinking buddies, and their love affair is with alcohol. Go to Al Anon for insights on how to deal with an alcoholic husband.

If sobriety isn't in Ron's scheme of things, you'll have to make the ultimate decision: Are you better off with or without him?

DEAR MEG — My sister-in-law and I are both expecting our first babies. When I found out she was pregnant, too, I was so excited. I was hoping we'd have a shower together and go shopping together for baby clothes. Since we are married to brothers, I thought it would be wonderful for our babies to grow up together. She and I had never been close, but for a few weeks, the pregnancies brought us together.

My husband and I live at his parents' house. One day, when his brother and sister-in-law were over for dinner, the sister-in-law suddenly told the whole family that I wished she would have a miscarriage. I was so shocked I didn't know what to do.

Now, instead of getting to the bottom of this, my mother-in-law decided we shouldn't talk about it. My husband's brother has quit speaking to us, and his wife acts like I don't exist.

I've cried for days, and I feel like I'm walking around on eggshells. My husband and I almost have ulcers from keeping it all inside. I think we should talk about this and get it out in the open. Please give us some advice. — SILENCED, GLEN COVE, N.Y.

DEAR SILENCED — The bond based on your unborn babies proved frail in the face of your sister-in-law's hostility. Maybe she resented the fact that your pregnancy took some of the spotlight away from her.

Whatever her reason, there's no chance of airing your grievances as long as you have to subsist on your in-laws' turf. Your mother-in-law rules the roost, and she has declared no discussion or discussion.

Your best bet is to get your own place. You and hubby don't need ulcers, and your new baby deserves to be brought up in an open, loving atmosphere.

DEAR MEG — We live in Las Vegas and go to the casinos and restaurants often. Of course, we use the restrooms, too. We see a lot of people — a real cross-section of America — and we're shocked to find that over 50 percent of men and women don't wash their hands after using the restroom. Many of these people are very well dressed.

From what I've read, many germs as well as colds and flu are transferred when shaking hands. People worry unnecessarily about how AIDS is transmitted, yet fail to take precautions against everyday diseases. Do you think it's a bad habit from childhood? In any case, please get the word out. — BETTY AND JOE, LAS VEGAS, NEV.

DEAR B & J — People who frequent gaming casinos are more than likely to end up with nothing for their money. But it's an even surer bet that they'll get something for nothing — any number of unwelcome ailments — if they ignore the most elementary rule of hygiene: Wash your hands!

I don't know if it's a bad habit from childhood or a game of hygienic Russian roulette. But I'm glad to add my warning to yours: Even gamblers with winning hands can be losers with unwashed hands in the personal-hygiene department.

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By Polly Fisher

DEAR POLLY — To avoid a long search when I need a discount coupon, I affix the coupon with masking tape to the product currently on my shelf — soap, cereal, etc. It's handy for the next purchase. — L.E.P.