

# Outlook on Lifestyle

## Medical ethics deserve note

DR. GOTT



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By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

The new buzz-word in medical circles is "ethics." Judging from the deluge of articles in doctors' professional journals, you'd think that physicians don't know enough to come in out of the rain.

Medical schools increasingly are offering didactic course-work in ethics and, in some teaching hospitals, ethicists are making patient-rounds with the residents. Many hospitals have formed ethics committees to provide guidance in difficult situations.

In its broadest sense, "ethics" re-

fers to how physicians behave toward one another and with patients. This includes fundamental issues of honesty, plagiarism, patients' expectations, a philosophy of practice (i.e. "good" doctor vs. "bad" doctor), greed, patient treatment-refusals, discontinuation of aggressive therapy of terminal illness, and euthanasia.

In its narrowest sense, "ethics" has primarily been viewed as pertaining to death, in the forms of "active" or "passive" euthanasia. This has quite extensively (and properly) been addressed by the President's Commis-

sion for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research.

I used to believe that neophyte healers entered medical school with a well-developed system of ethics: They knew right from wrong. Now I'm not so sure. Last year, Time magazine featured a cover story about "moral disarray in America." Evidently, in our decade of spiritual exhaustion, we've been neglecting something called conscience. This handicap may be affecting a whole generation of young people who often seem preoccupied with materialism and me-ism. This preoccupation may make for wealthy stockbrokers and businessmen, but it's the kiss of death for doctors.

Despite the bad press, I hope that today's doctor-to-be will continue to enjoy a solid foundation of ethical behavior, because I believe that most young people know deep down what a good doctor should be. Decency, fairness, consideration and compassion remain the cornerstones of ethical medical practice. These qualities can be fine-tuned through the process of education, but I think they're basically present (or absent) by the time a child reaches the age of 12.

On the other hand, euthanasia is a trickier topic because, in most instances, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. In addition, non-medical people — lawyers, clergy and ordinary men and women — have become anxious about how medical technology has altered both the con-

cept and the natural history of death itself. Actually, the line between "active" and "passive" euthanasia has been blurred; the President's Commission chooses to refer to "actions that lead to death" and "omissions that lead to death," rather than "killing" and "letting die." Here is where we need help — from the law, academia, philosophy and patients themselves.

While the subject is being debated, I trust that physicians will continue to adhere to that part of the Hippocratic oath ("To please no one will I prescribe a deadly drug, nor give advice which may cause his death"), which has guided the healing profession for centuries.

In short, not doing something to keep someone alive is ethical; murder is not. If we break the rule, as we sometimes do, we must be prepared to face the consequences.

All practicing doctors have the wherewithal to kill patients. Conscience and honor prevent us from exercising this frightening power. And we must always resist this temptation, expedient though it may be, to use this power. If we give in to the relativists, we will abdicate the trust and respect placed in us by the public.

In the final analysis, most ethical issues can be reduced to right and wrong. In the process of deciding these issues, we mustn't lose sight of a crucial moral dictum, so deceptively simple that it is almost a cliché: Above all, do no harm.

## Make colorful, zesty deviled eggs

By Polly Fisher

DEAR POLLY — I would like to share with your readers this recipe for deviled eggs. Halve 1 dozen peeled hard-boiled eggs and remove the yolks. Reserve the white halves. Mix the yolks, 1 cup broccoli, 4 ounces cream cheese and ¼ cup creamy salad dressing or mayonnaise in a blender or food processor. Fill the white halves with the mixture. You can also chop the egg whites and stir into the yolk mixture to use as egg salad on sandwiches. — L.Z.

DEAR L.Z. — These deviled eggs are colorful, nutritious and delicious!

DEAR POLLY — After enjoying your column for a long time, I wish to make a small contribution in return, a suggestion about cleaning and preserving hand saws. First, remove the handles and thoroughly remove all the rust. Next warm the blade over the low heat of an electric hot plate. Rub the blade lightly with a candle stub or other wax, spreading it over the entire surface. Repeat on the oth-

er side. Clean the excess wax with a paper towel while the saw is still warm. The result is a clean-cutting saw that does not leave stains. Replace the handles and you're back in business. — LOU

DEAR POLLY — I needed something to hold garbage. The solution I found was to cut the top off a 2-liter plastic soda bottle. I lined the bottom and sides with an empty bread wrapper, draping the top of the wrapper

down over the side of the container. When it became full, I pulled up the top and knotted it, then tossed it in the trash.

The top of the soda bottle makes a neat funnel if you need one. — ELLA

DEAR POLLY — Can buttermilk be used in muffin and pancake recipes that call for regular milk? — GAYLE

DEAR GAYLE — Buttermilk can be substituted, but remember it will give the product its own subtle tang. To make the recipe work correctly, however, you must adjust it as follows: Add ¼ teaspoon baking soda for

each cup of buttermilk. This will counteract the acidity in the buttermilk (since the original recipe was formulated for sweet milk) and will ensure good flavor and light, well-risen muffins and pancakes.

You may, of course, substitute buttermilk for yogurt or sour milk specified in any recipe without making any adjustments, since those products are also acidic. — POLLY

RECIPE OF THE WEEK: Celebrate the apple harvest with this delicious mulled cider. Combine 1 quart apple cider, ¼ cup honey, 2 lemon slices, 6 whole cloves, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg and four cinnamon sticks in a large saucepan. Simmer for 10 minutes. Serve warm, placing one of the cinnamon sticks in each mug or glass as a stirrer. Serves four.

DEAR POLLY — After scraping the seeds out of a vanilla bean to use in a pudding or custard, bury the pod in a container of sugar and cover it tightly. The sugar will pick up the delicious vanilla flavor and can be used in desserts. — B.I.

## ASK KATHY

Dear KATHY

I've read about hundreds of diets and how unsafe some of them are. How do I go about selecting a weight-loss program that is both safe and effective?

Reply:

Losing weight is one of the most important things you will do in your life and selecting the proper way to go about it can be difficult. When looking at the various diet plans, there are several things you should ask yourself that will help you make your decision. First, how long has the diet been around? Fad diets usually come and go within a year. Second, does the diet require special foods or products? If you switch from food that is readily available to prepackaged foods, you are more likely to regain your weight when you return to your regular diet. Finally, does the diet make outrageous weight-loss claims? Excessive weight loss is often in the form of water and muscle, not fat.



KATHY DUMAS  
Diet Center Counselor

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