

Myasthenia gravis has many results

DR. GOTT



PETER GOTT, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT: I'm 67 and have been told I have myasthenia gravis, but was given no details. What can I expect?

DEAR READER: Myasthenia gravis is a chronic nerve disease, characterized by episodic muscle weakness. The illness is known to be autoimmune, meaning that patients become allergic to a normal component in their own bodies. In the case of myasthenia gravis, this allergy is to the acetylcholine receptor at the neuromuscular junction, the precise area where electrical impulses jump from the nerve to the muscle. Patients with myasthenia experience weakness because nerve impulses are prevented from reaching the muscles, so the muscles cannot contract.

The most common symptoms of myasthenia are double vision (because of weak ocular muscles), dropped upper eyelids and generalized fatigue following exercise. Difficulty swallowing and breathing can

complicate the picture. Life-threatening respiratory paralysis occurs in about 10 percent of patients.

The diagnosis is established by the injection of edrophonium, a drug that temporarily enhances the transmission of nerve impulses to muscle. Myasthenic patients will experience a miraculously prompt improvement in strength and symptoms. However, the effect is transitory.

Long-term treatment, using similar drugs (neostigmine or pyridostigmine), is almost always successful in permanently reversing much of the weakness myasthenic patients experience.

In selected cases of severe myasthenia, thymectomy (removal of the thymus gland) is beneficial. The thymus may be a major source of the allergic antibodies that affect the nerves.

Finally, some patients are helped by plasmapheresis, a technique by which large volumes of blood are removed and the red blood cells are re-infused back into the patient. The removal of the liquid portion of the blood, which contains antibodies, enables certain patients to reduce the doses of medicine.

In summary, myasthenia gravis can be controlled by a variety of methods. However, the treatment of the disease is tricky and should be undertaken only by experienced specialists, such as neurologists.

For more information, I'm sending you a copy of my Health Report "Choosing a Physician." 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: My children are involved in high school sports. The team members all share water bottles. Is this hygienic?

DEAR READER: In my opinion, the sharing of water bottles is inappropriate.

Several studies have shown that bacteria and viruses are easily spread from one team member to another from common drinking containers. In particular, strep throat, colds, mononucleosis and hepatitis are transmissible by this route. I suggest two alternatives.

First, squeeze bottles enable athletes to squirt water into their mouths without touching the containers.

Second, individual paper cups filled from a common water supply with a ladle help prevent spread of germs.

Suggest to the team physician or to the head coach that water bottles be exchanged for more hygienic methods.

As one of my duties, I am physician for a well-known New England independent school. Some years ago, I insisted that coaches discontinue use of team water bottles.

Outlook on Lifestyle

How do mothers get things done?

POLLY'S POINTERS



POLLY FISHER

If tasks with baby on board. (With a well-designed baby sling, you can even breast-feed a baby while walking about!)

I don't have room in this column for any more today, but I'll continue tomorrow with additional ideas. Meanwhile, readers, start thinking and send me your own suggestions for helping us moms cope! — POLLY

DEAR POLLY — Could you ask your readers for hints on how to get household chores done while taking care of small children? I have two children, one five months old and the other 2½ years old, and some days I can't seem to get anything done at all. What's the secret? — ANDREA

DEAR ANDREA — There is no secret! Almost every mom I've spoken to often feels exactly the same way you do, so don't think you're the only one who has trouble getting household work done while caring for your children.

The truth of the matter is that taking care of your kids is your main job; cleaning, cooking, laundry, etc., come second and are only important insofar as these tasks assist you in taking care of your family. So the first rule is to do only as much as is necessary for your own and your family's well-being. Sure, you need to keep the kids in clean clothes, and they need food to eat, but don't feel that you have to prepare gourmet meals, do all your own baking or have a "company's coming" house at all times. Learn to live with a little dust and clutter, rely on prepared or quick-to-fix foods, or whatever other measures you can think of to make your housekeeping easier.

But there are still some basic chores to be done, you say? Here are a few strategies to help you cope with them:

Prioritize — Decide which tasks are most important and which are less so. When you do have time to do something, start with the most crucial and let the rest slide.

Schedule — If you know you have an hour in the afternoon when the baby is napping and your toddler is watching "Sesame Street," plan to do a specific task at that time, then don't worry about it for the rest of the day. This doesn't sound that helpful, but I do find it keeps me from feeling guilty and worried that I'm not going to get anything done at all. Of course with little ones around, schedules can fly out the window, but even if it works half the time, you'll be accomplishing

something. Invest in a baby carrier, either a backpack or the new sling style, so you can wear your baby (or sometimes even your 2-year-old) while you do housework. Most babies love riding around with Mom this way, and you can accomplish a surprising number

Make your home safe for those exploring toddlers with the important advice in Polly's newsletter "Childproofing your Home." Send \$1 for each copy to POLLY'S POINTERS, in care of this newspaper, P.O. Box 93863, Cleveland, OH 44101-5863. Be sure to include the title.

Network link gets funding

Ontario's Multiple Organ Retrieval and Exchange (MORE) program will receive \$1.3 million to establish its Toronto headquarters and install a computer network to link five transplant centres.

Capital funding of \$839,000 has been allocated to MORE to set up its Toronto office at 984 Bay St. and to establish the computer link to transplant centres in Toronto, Hamilton, London, Kingston and Ottawa.

The network will keep a record of potential recipients in Ontario, placing them on a single waiting list. The network, the first of its kind in Canada, will be operational early in the new year.

MORE's computer network will unify the process of locating and matching organs and recipients. At present, each transplant centre maintains its own data bank and matches organs and recipients by phone.

The ministry will be providing ongoing operating funds. MORE will receive \$488,000 to operate its program in 1988-89.

Judge Heather Smith of Toronto has accepted an invitation to chair MORE's Board of Directors.

Judge Smith replaces Dr. Robert McClure, former Moderator of the United Church of Canada, who resigned as chairman, but remains a member of the board of directors.

MORE was established in 1967 to operate the network and to develop standards for provincial organ distribution based on sound ethical, medical and scientific principles.

Its responsibilities also include conducting audits and reviews of organ and tissue retrieval and distribution.

In 1967, Ontario's five centres performed 253 kidney transplants, 91 liver transplants, 79 heart transplants and 17 lung transplants.

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fabric forum

Prepared by the International Fabricare Institute (IFI),
the association of professional drycleaners & laundrers

Why Does the Lining Wear Out First?

Consumers often notice that the hem, underarm, or cuff lining material is abraded while the outer fabric is in good condition. This occurs because the lining materials are often much thinner or sheerer than the outer fabric. In addition, many linings are constructed in a satin weave, which has floating yarns to give the fabric a high luster and sheen. These satin fabrics naturally wear much faster than tightly woven fabrics. Furthermore, the lining

in the collar, cuffs, and hem are more susceptible to heavy soiling and abrasion, and soiled fabrics wear faster than clean ones. Finally, objects carried in the pockets can cause lining material to progressively wear thin in localized areas.



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Halton Hills Job Board

The Canada Employment Centre is located at 232 Guelph Street, Georgetown and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. The following represents only a few of the Career Opportunities listed on their Job Boards.

Order 0939833 - **DICTA TYPIST** - Permanent part time, 2-3 days a week. \$8.91 - \$10.88/hour, depending on experience. Employer would prefer a grad of medical secretarial course or someone who has had experience as a dicta typist, using medical terminology. Must be able to type 50 wpm.

Order 0947642 - **FLEXOGRAPHIC PRINTING TRAINEE** - Permanent fulltime, Continental Shifts. \$10/hour plus full benefits (unionized). Must have Grade 12 and be able to lift 80 lbs. Must have a strong learning capacity and show potential for advancement. Industrial background is an asset.

Order 0958231 - **WINDOW INSTALLER** - Permanent fulltime days (piece work). Minimum 1 year's experience in window installation preferred. Must have own tools and vehicle. Good presentation. Able to deal courteously with customers. Able to work on own. \$10 - \$20/hour (piece work).

Order 0925939 - **DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES COUNSELLOR** - Wage negotiable, depending on experience. Permanent fulltime and part time available. Fulltime position requires a degree in Behavioral Science or Developmental Services Certificate. For part time work, experience working with the handicapped is preferred.

Order 0934789 - **BAKER** - Permanent fulltime nights, 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. \$7/hour or more depending on experience. Previous experience is preferred but not essential. Employer is willing to train a person who is sincerely interested in baking. Must be willing to work steady nights.

Order 0956659 - **VACUUM FORMING MACHINE TENDER** - Permanent fulltime. 7 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Thursday) and 7 a.m. to noon Friday or 4:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. Monday to Friday. Must be reliable and have a good work attitude. Previous experience in the plastics industry is an asset. \$8/hour to start.

If you are interested in any of the above positions, visit the Georgetown CEC.