

New help for hair loss is available

DR. GOTT



PETER GOTT, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT: I'm losing hair very fast and would appreciate any help you can give. I'm only 31.

DEAR READER: Hair loss can be due to scalp disease, such as seborrhea or psoriasis. It can also be genetic. In particular, many young men who note — with alarm — thinning hair at their temples and on top have an inherited tendency to hair loss.

Many scalp conditions can be treated successfully by dermatologists,

thereby arresting hair loss. In the past, male-pattern genetic baldness was untreatable, except by hair transplants, the results of which were inconsistent. Now there is real hope for people who are growing prematurely bald: Rogaine (minoxidil) topical solution, a prescription drug, has been proved effective in restoring hair growth, when used strictly according to the manufacturer's directions. Ask your doctor about this new product.

DEAR DR. GOTT: What are the effects of the drug called bromocriptine?

DEAR READER: Bromocriptine (Parlodel) is a drug used for several different conditions, including infertility, amenorrhea (lack of menstrual periods), prevention of lactation and some forms of Parkinson's disease.

The medicine acts by enhancing the body's production of dopamine, a

nerve hormone, which controls lactation (and, secondarily, menstruation); Parlodel stimulates dopamine receptors in the brain (thereby reducing the tremor of Parkinson's disease).

The drug has many side effects, including nausea, headache, dizziness, fatigue, cramps, constipation and drowsiness. Occasional patients may experience low blood pressure, hallucinations, trouble walking and circulatory disturbances.

Parlodel is a useful drug but its administration should be carefully monitored by appropriate medical specialists.

For more information, I am sending you a copy of my Health Report "Consumer Tips on Medicines." Other readers who would like a copy should send \$1.25 with their name and address to P.O. Box 91369, Cleveland, OH 44101-3369. Be sure to mention the title.

\$3.8 million is peanuts



Ottawa

Vic Parsons

For most of us, a windfall of \$3.8 million would be like a win in the lotteries.

For the federal government, it's peanuts. Based on the calculations of Finance Minister Michael Wilson, it will feed only an hour-and-a-quarter's worth of payments on the elephantine national debt.

Nevertheless, it's \$3.8 million more than the federal government would have had if Wilson's budget had been delivered at the scheduled time.

When the budget was leaked a day early, Wilson announced that an assortment of tax measures — which were to go into effect April 28 — would instead start at 10 p.m. April 26.

These included increases in sales taxes on tobacco and alcohol, and higher excise levies on gasoline, cigarettes, cigars and manufactured tobacco. The increases would bring about \$3.8 million into federal coffers daily.

That's one of the lesser-known results of the federal budget. Here are a few other tidbits that haven't been widely reported:

—Effective Oct. 1, the government is raising the interest rate that it charges on unpaid taxes and pays on refunds.

The existing rate is 12 per cent, which is generally lower than what Canadians now pay for borrowed money. The auditor general criticized this situation in his last report, saying that owing tax was more attractive than other forms of credit.

BILLIONS OWED

A result is that \$4.5 billion was owed the government by late-paying taxpayers as of last March 31, up 15 per cent over the previous year. "Higher interest rates are to be charged to encourage prompt payment of taxes and instalments," the budget documents say.

The new rate will be calculated from average 90-day treasury bill interest rates, rounded up to the nearest percentage point, plus two percentage points. Based on current "T-bill" rates of about 12.30 per cent, that would mean a rate of

15 per cent next October. The figure will drop if interest rates fall.

Finance officials expect this move to bring in an extra \$60 million.

—Wilson is proposing that owners of compounding investments, such as Canada Savings Bonds and guaranteed investment certificates, be required to declare interest every year on those instruments bought after 1989. That would eliminate the option of reporting the income every three years.

The government would benefit from this move because it receives more in interest payments if tax money rolls in sooner. It would make a revenue gain of \$200 million in the 1991 tax year, \$300 million in 1992, and "modest" amounts thereafter.

MAKES PROFIT

—There's good news from Canada Post. The much-maligned agency expected to make its first profit in 30 years in the recently ended fiscal year.

This profitability is anticipated to carry on for the next five years. What's more, it proposes to cut back a planned two-cent increase in first-class postage rates to a penny in 1990.

If you mail two letters a day throughout the year, that deferred postage increase will save you the magnificent sum of \$7.30.

—Next year, the upper limit on tax-deductible contributions into a registered retirement savings plan was to rise to \$10,500 from \$7,500

for those without pension plans. This has now been delayed for another year because Wilson feared there wouldn't be enough time for employers to make necessary payroll system changes.

If you have a pension plan, the limit stays a \$3,500, minus whatever payments are made into your plan.

Also, the new RRSP limit of 18 per cent of earned income won't go into effect until 1991. Until then, it'll be 20 per cent.

—The telecommunications services sales tax will rise to 11 per cent on June 1 from 10 per cent. That tax, which applies to cablevision and telephones, is expected to reap \$60 million for Ottawa this year and \$110 million next year.

—Workers who happen to be disabled will be able to deduct costs of care provided by a part-time, unrelated attendant. The costs of attendants are seen as a barrier to participation by the disabled in the workforce.

—Machinery and equipment used primarily in the processing or treatment of toxic wastes will be exempt from federal sales tax.

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