# Chelation therapy needs testing

## DR. GOTT

PETER GOTT, M.D.

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT: I take great exception to your negative comments about chelation therapy for arteriosclerosis.

This process has really stood the test of time. The International Chelation Research Foundation is now co-sponsoring the first controlled study to put this scientifically valid therapy in proper perspective.

DEAR READER: That's just the point. To date, there have been no reputable scientific studies of chelation therapy for the treatment of arteriosclerosis. Therefore, I conclude that the therapy has *not* withstood the test of time. Until such studies have been performed and reported, I will continue to maintain that chelation treatment of arteriosclerosis is quackery.

Chelation therapy, the use of chemical agents to bind minerals in the body, is a medically accepted technique to treat certain toxic states, such as lead poisoning. If and when scientific investigation proves it beneficial in treating arteriosclerosis, I'll change my opinion. However, at present, proof is lacking, so I advise patients to stay away from the method until it has been thoroughly tested.

DEAR DR. GOTT: Is there anything that can be done to cure a viral infection? I understand that antibiotics are ineffective. I'm having my second bad case of bronchitis in less than a year.

DEAR READER: Viruses are not affected by antibiotics. Some viruses are killed by anti-viral drugs — such as acyclovir, zidovudine, amantadine and vidarabine — but these microorganisms shrug off medicine, such as penicillin and sulfa.

Therefore, most responsible physicians discourage the use of antibiotics for routine viral infections, reserving anti-viral drugs for severe or life-threatening situations. Fortunately, most people with normal immune systems successfully combat virus infections with little more than rest, fluids and aspirin.

Bronchitis can be caused by viruses. However, repeated attacks of bronchial infection usually mean that bacteria have moved into tissue that was first weakened by the viruses. In such cases, antibiotic therapy usually eradicates the "opportunistic" bacteria. As I'm sure you know, cigarette smoking can make matters worse by further reducing the lungs' defenses.

I believe you need a sputum culture. By analyzing the mucus you cough up, the doctor can identify the type of infection and administer the proper medicine. Ask your physician to advise you.


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