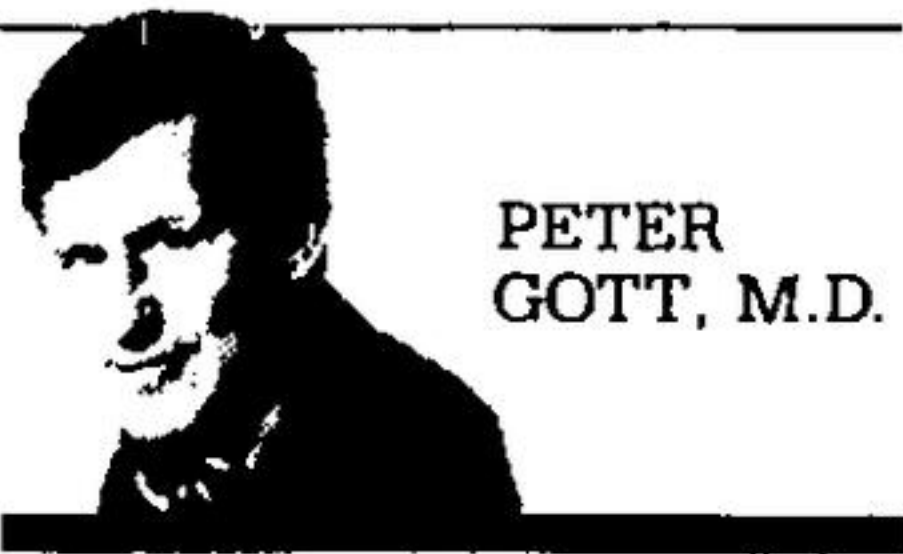


New technique treats gallstones

DR. GOTT



PETER GOTT, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT: I'm 71 and have been diagnosed with a calcified gall bladder. I've been advised to undergo an operation. Please, what is a calcified gall bladder? Are there any treatment methods, other than surgery? Will it become cancerous if not removed?

DEAR READER: Whenever chronic inflammation exists in tissue, the body is often stimulated to form excess calcium in those areas. For example, chronically irritated tendons become calcified, and infected lymph nodes may become filled with specks of calcium; both conditions are readily visible on X-rays. Similarly, the wall of the gall bladder can become calcified, giving it the feel and appearance of a cracked egg. This usu-

ally means the gall-bladder wall is chronically inflamed.

The calcification alone is not a serious condition, does not require surgery and won't lead to cancer. However, the inflammation (causing the calcification) is another matter. It can result from gallstones or other, poorly understood inflammatory processes. Therefore, while you needn't worry about the calcifications, your doctors may suspect more than meets the eye.

If you have been advised to have your gall bladder removed and have been offered no other options, I think you need a second opinion. Seek a consultation with a gastroenterologist, who will determine the cause of your inflammation/calcification and recommend therapy, if indicated. For instance, if you do have gallstones, and they are causing your symptoms, you might be a candidate for a new technique that dissolves gallstones chemically, rather than surgery. Or the specialist might advise you to leave well enough alone.

DEAR DR. GOTT: My 52-year-old friend has shingles. We've been told they are contagious — that she should stay away from children and older people. Our local Board of Health says shingles are caused from a nervous condition. Help.

DEAR READER: Your local Board of Health is pulling your leg. Shingles is a contagious virus infection of nerves in the skin. The cause is varicella/zoster virus, which is related to chicken pox.

Ordinarily, shingles appears as stinging and itching blisters in a dermatome, a bandlike section of skin on one side of the body. Eventually, the blisters break, leaving raw and inflamed areas that can remain uncomfortable for several weeks.


Patients are contagious primarily during the acute phase, when the blisters appear. The virus is spread by direct contact. Pregnant women should avoid shingles patients, because the varicella/zoster virus can enter the mother's body and infect the fetus, even if the woman herself is immune. This could harm the unborn baby.

Likewise, the elderly are more at risk, because their immune systems often have weakened with age.

I hope you misunderstood your Board of Health's representative. Saying that shingles is caused by a "nervous condition" is akin to the old teaching that tuberculosis is caused by breathing in fog. This is obviously incorrect. Ask your Board of Health to reconsider its pronouncement, in light of more modern views, on the cause of shingles.

To give you more information, I am sending you a free copy of my Health Report "Help I — Physical Illness."

Fame and Fortune Top 10 entertainers by earnings

	Star/age occupation	Two-year total in millions, '88-'89
	Michael Jackson/31 Pop singer	\$125
	Steven Spielberg/41 Movie producer, director	\$105
	William H. Cosby Jr./52 Actor, comedian, author	\$95
	Mike Tyson/23 Boxer	\$71
	Charles M. Schulz/66 Cartoonist (Peanuts)	\$60
	Eddie Murphy/28 Comedian, actor	\$57
	Pink Floyd Rock group (3 members)	\$56
	The Rolling Stones Rock group (5 members)	\$55
	Oprah Winfrey/35 TV host, producer	\$55
	George Michael/26 Pop singer	\$47

ASK KATHY:

Dear Kathy

As a busy executive I find it difficult to eat right. I start early and stay late and although I seldom leave my desk, I'm on the go almost constantly. I've tried to lose a few extra pounds, but I seem to be starved when I arrive home after work. Can you help?

Reply?

Your problem probably stems from your busy schedule and from erratic eating. This leads to serious overeating at night, when your energy needs are at their lowest, which leads to weight gain.

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KATHY HAJAS
Diet Center Counselor

pounds in just six weeks. Call today for a free consultation and find out how controlling stress can put you in control of your life!

Look for old fashioned luck

ASTRO-GRAPH



BERNICE BEDE OSOL



It looks like good old fashioned luck will play a key role in your affairs in the year ahead, especially in areas where you'll be trying to get an enterprise off the ground.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Everyone is likely to fare better in the long run today if the control of an important matter is in your hands instead of being run by a committee. Scorpio, treat yourself to a birthday gift.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Although you are likely to opt to stay in the background today, your ideas and suggestions will still have a strong effect on others. However, you might not receive credit for authorship.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Group endeavors look promising for you today, whether it is dealing with a big organization or just a large group of people at a gathering.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) Important pieces could be coming together for you as of today and there is a possibility you may experience success both socially and commercially.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) What you leave unsaid today might serve you better than what you express. This is be-

cause others will use their imagination to fill in the blank spaces to please themselves.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) It looks like Lady Luck may intervene in a matter that has been concerning you lately. As of today the picture could change from dark shades to bright hues.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Compromise is a very effective tool in your hands today and it can be used constructively to adjust arrangements where critical issues are at stake.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Don't be overly concerned about your compensation today regarding your work. If you do a good job, the rewards should be commensurate to your efforts.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Someone will be saying nice things about you today that will enhance your image in the eyes of others. You might not hear what is said, but you'll feel its impact.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) If you're a positive thinker today, it will govern your actions and produce desirable results, especially in a situation you've been trying to pin down to your advantage.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Your expectations will have a better chance of being realized today if you show others with whom you're involved that it could mean equally as much for them. Make sure everyone benefits.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Conditions look bright for you today in the material realm. Strangely enough, however, your good fortune could come from being more lucky than logical.

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