

# Planning your care after hysterectomy

**DR. GOTT**



**PETER GOTT, M.D.**

**DEAR DR. GOTT:** I'm a 56-year-old female who had a hysterectomy eight years ago. The ovaries were not removed. My gynecologist recommends yearly Pap smears. My family doctor claims they're not necessary since I have no uterus. Who is right, and what are the chances of cancer of the ovaries?

**DEAR READER:** You raise an interesting question that I have yet to resolve.

The Pap test is a method of examining the cells of the cervix (mouth of the uterus) to detect malignant changes. Ordinarily, during a hysterectomy, the uterus and cervix are removed. Therefore, in my opinion, a Pap test becomes meaningless if there is no cervix to examine.

I do not insist that my post-hysterectomy patients have Pap tests, and I've argued this point with many gynecologists.

On the other hand, gynecologists claim that such women should continue to have Pap smears — not of the (absent) cervix but of the vaginal wall — to identify the small possibility of vaginal cancer. I don't buy this reasoning, but I defer to them as specialists.

In any case, the Pap test has no value whatsoever in detecting ovarian cancer. The ovaries lie deep in the pelvis; a Pap test does not show the state of the ovaries, even in women who have not had surgery.

Your chances of developing ovarian cancer are not increased because of your hysterectomy. This type of malignancy is difficult to diagnose early because it does not become evident until an ovary has enlarged and can be felt during a pelvic examination. I suggest you continue to check with your family doctor at periodic intervals and use the gynecologist for problems needing the attention of a specialist.

To give you more information, I am sending you a free copy of my Health Report "Vaginal Infections and Disorders." 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.

**DEAR DR. GOTT:** My hubby dresses like a lady every October. Last Halloween he dressed like a she-devil. What can I do to help?

**DEAR READER:** Your hubby has a problem: Pretty soon he'll run out of costumes.

If all he does is dress up once a year, he probably isn't a real cross-dresser; his habit doesn't reflect a severe sexual disorientation.

In what way do you want to help him? Perhaps you can make a game out of his annual urge by helping him apply makeup, assisting him in choosing a character every Halloween or — as a last resort — dressing yourself as a he-devil. In any case, give him a trick and a treat.

Obviously, if your husband insists on some kinky sex when he impersonates females, you may feel uncomfortable. In this instance, you both

would benefit from psychological counseling.

**DEAR DR. GOTT:** My daughter has been prescribed Nardil for severe depression. What are the side effects of this drug? He also told her not to eat cheese or any aged foods. What's the connection?

**DEAR READER:** Nardil is one of a group of drugs called monoamine oxidase inhibitors. MAO is a complex enzyme system, distributed widely throughout the body. No one understands precisely whether Nardil exerts its anti-depressant effects through the MAO system or through other reactions.

The most serious complication of Nardil therapy is extremely high blood pressure. This dangerous side effect is more common in patients on Nardil who take additional drugs, such as cocaine, amphetamines, L-dopa (for Parkinson's disease), methyldopa (for high blood pressure) and L-tryptophan (an over-the-counter amino acid that recently has been implicated as a cause of a dangerous blood disorder).

Also, foods — such as cheeses, beer, wine, yeast extract, caffeine, chocolate, luncheon meats and yogurt — containing the chemicals tyramine or dopamine can trigger a hypertensive crisis in Nardil patients. Therefore, when Nardil is prescribed, the physician usually takes great pains to outline the various food and drug prohibitions.

Although Nardil is useful in alleviating depression coupled with anxiety, it must be administered with caution; patients must be alerted to the substances that react adversely with it.

To give you more information, I am sending you a free 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.

**DEAR DR. GOTT:** My boyfriend's testicles are bigger on one side than the other and hang a lot lower when he stands. He says there's nothing wrong with him, but I think he should see a doctor about this.

**DEAR READER:** One testicle is normally in a lower position than the other; this serves to protect these sensitive organs. In situations where the testicles are forced together, one slides under the other. Also, one testicle is usually bigger than the other.

Men show enormous variation in how low their testicles hang. This is due to the cremasteric muscle fibers that attach to the testicles. When the muscles contract, the testicles are pulled upward. Again, this serves a protective function. For example, when a man is cold, the testicles are drawn closer to the body to warm them.

# Meet friends in the year ahead

## ASTRO-GRAPH



**BERNICE BEDE OSOL**



## Your Birthday

Friends and contacts have always been of importance to you, and in the year ahead they are likely to be even more so. Opportunities, as well as pleasant adventures, will come your way through persons with whom you'll pal around.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)** Tides and trends are beginning to change today which should be to your liking. The new wave offers possibilities for fulfillment of your expectations. Aquarius, treat yourself to a birthday gift.

## OUR LANGUAGE

by Jeffrey McQuain

**Nose out** wins by a small margin. If you didn't know this verb phrase, though, don't get your nose out of joint.

**Tatty** describes a worn or shabby appearance. Please don't consider me batty if I suggest that you rhyme tatty with batty.

**Q.** My kids are fascinated about dinosaurs. Where did that word come from?

**A.** Dinosaur combines two Greek roots: *deinos*, "terrible," and *sauros*, "lizard." This word for the prehistoric creature has been used in English since 1841. Older dictionaries list a variant *deinosaur*, but that spelling now seems to be extinct.

**Uptime** covers whatever time a computer functions or works properly. During football season, many computer users hope uptime coincides with halftime.

**Forspent** means "worn out" or "exhausted." This adjective is now labeled "archaic," which suggests that *forspent* is *forspent*.

**Q.** Before I sing "Auld Lang Syne" on New Year's Eve, can you tell me what the title means?

**A.** *Auld lang syne* literally means "old long since," which admittedly isn't the clearest expression. It refers to "the good old days," memories of happier times and old friendships. When you sing this Scottish phrase, you're using centuries-old words to celebrate *auld lang syne*.

**PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20)** You have an effective friend upon whom you can depend to help further your personal interests today. However, his support might not be very visible to observers.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)** You may become involved with someone today who will take an immediate interest in a matter that is of importance to you. His/her helpful suggestions will prove extremely constructive.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)** Today you have a special knack for being able to fit yourself into beneficial arrangements that others have going for them. You'll do it in a manner they'll welcome rather than resent.

equally high esteem. It looks like this relationship might become more important with time.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)** Beginning today this is a good time to wrap up projects or ventures that have yet to be completed. You're in a promising cycle for producing desirable end results.

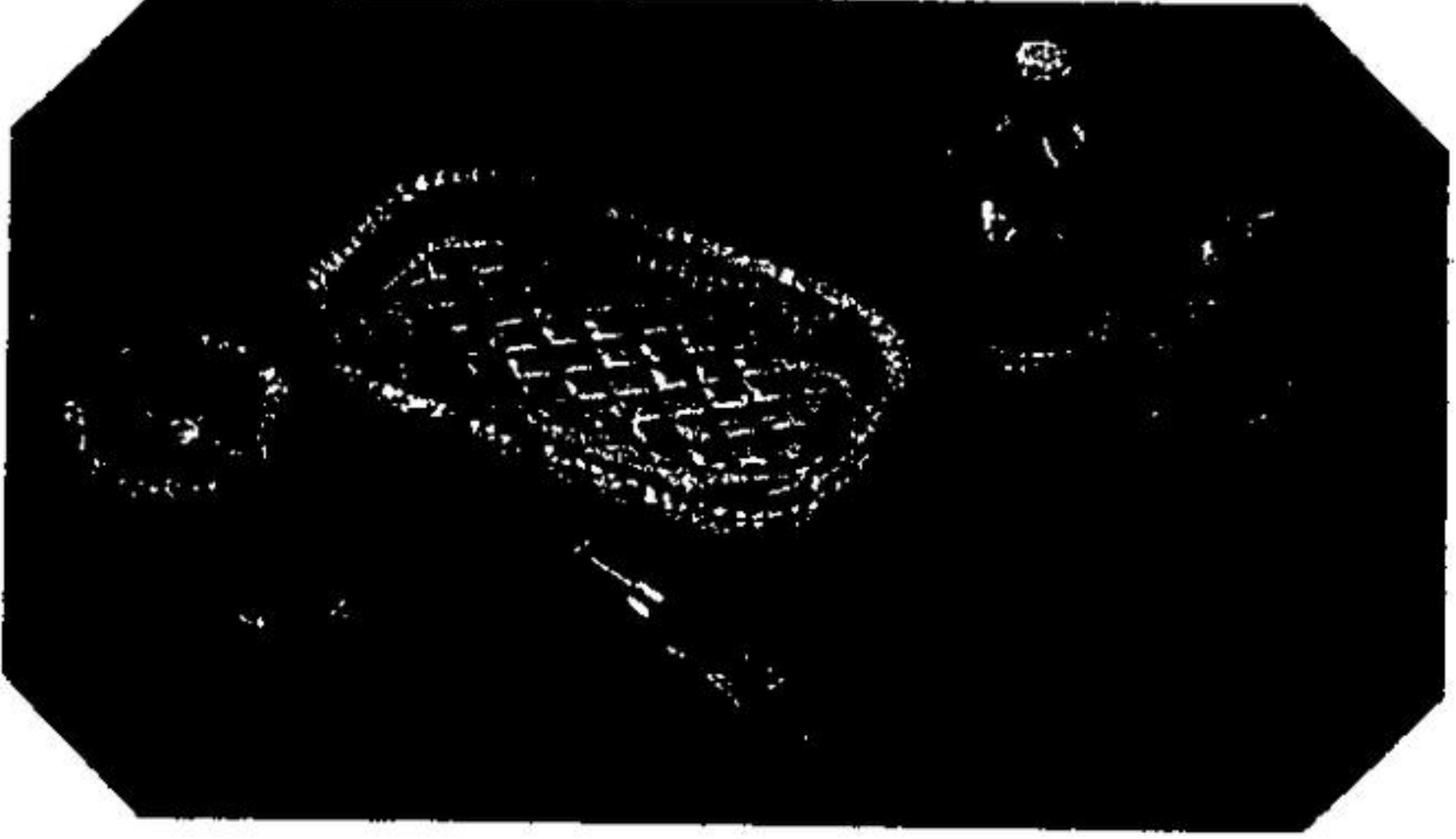
**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)** Early in the day is a propitious time to get together socially with a person with whom you have an important matter to discuss. Allow ample time to iron things out.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)** This is a cycle where you should be able to add to your resources or holdings if you are of the mind to do so. It will have to be your no. 1 priority, however.


**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)** You have excellent leadership qualities today, so try to involve yourself in activities that will produce positive results for you and your followers.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)** Rather than attempting to make things happen, let events unfold in their own way today. It looks like you'll come out better when conditions aren't entirely under your dominance.


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