

Lifeline

Medicine is not so mysterious

By Dr. JAMES CARSON
Does an apple a day keep the doctor away? Medicine has changed a lot since the days when the country doctor made housecalls from dawn till dusk and then till dawn again and the snakeoil salesman made his pitch at carnivals and work was the only exercise that most people enjoyed.

To most people medicine is still a mystery. Doctors use Latin words that end with "itis" or "osis". If you are not lucky your doctor will have halitosis! This may be only one of several reasons why patients don't heed their doctor's advice. The most common reason is poor communication between patient and doctor.

Many family physicians in Markham and Unionville still make housecalls. The modern day snakeoil salesman has different disguises and will promise you that their product will make you feel good.

However, these days most patients rarely say "whatever you think you're the doctor." People want to know more about their bodies and what they can do to keep fit and to practice good lifestyle habits.

In this space, Joanne Whitt (from Newbody's) and I will give you our own personal views on fitness, lifestyle, sports medicine and health. We hope to inform you and inspire you to seek a healthier you!

Whether you are young or just young at heart; whether your eyes glaze over when someone mentions the word fitness; whether you have no time or all day long to look after yourself; we will have

something for you. You may ask, what is Sports Medicine? This is one of the newest specialties and encompasses orthopaedics, injury prevention, fitness testing, nutrition, research, psychology, physiotherapy and the complete medical care of both the elite and recreational athlete. No expert can wear all these hats.

As a family physician, I believe that all Canadians have the opportunity to improve their health by attending to good lifestyle habits, exercise and personal stress management.

Therefore, many of the facets of sports medicine are directly related to preventive medicine and health promotion. This is why I have a special interest in sports medicine and wish to pass this information and other health concerns along to you.

If you are one of the many people who have lost hundreds of pounds dieting over the years, only to gain it all back again, my next topic is for you. "Diet is a dirty four letter word." Remember, it takes more muscles in your face to frown than to smile. So keep smiling!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. James Carson is a Unionville physician with a special interest in sports medicine. He and Joanne Whitt, a trained kinesiologist and part-owner of New Bodies fitness centre, will be writing regularly in the Weekender. Questions should be forwarded to Lifeline, Markham Economist and Sun, 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ontario L3P 1M3.

Lynne Gordon says: 'Let buyer beware'

Let the buyer beware. That was the message delivered by consumer advocate Lynne Gordon when she addressed the First Wednesday Network, Markham.

Ms. Gordon said it is the consumer's responsibility to know what he or she wants and to be informed as to what is available. She warned shoppers to check the fine print on package deals. The cost of every item is covered even though some things may be advertised as free.

Store policy on refunds and returns should be checked into before a consumer buys. If the store's policy is clearly stated and visible at the time of purchase, then the terms of purchase stand firm.

Ms. Gordon said the consumer should speak to the store manager before buying if unhappy with store policy. But if the product doesn't measure up to its advertising the customer has every right to return it for refund or exchange.

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