

Dr. Peter Gott



Have undescended testicle checked

DEAR DR. GOTT: My husband has an undescended testicle. Should it be checked? Should we worry?

DEAR READER: Yes, on both counts. Undescended testicles have a higher incidence of malignancy. Although some men's testicles tend to "ride high" in the scrotum and retract easily into the groin, a testicle that is truly undescended should be examined by a urologist. In such cases, the testicle is either brought into its proper position by surgery or is removed altogether. This is an excellent example of preventive medicine to avoid future problems. While this is not an emergency, I urge your husband to be checked.

DEAR DOCTOR GOTT: My husband dresses like a lady every October. This Halloween he dressed like a she-devil. What can I do to help him with this fetish?

DEAR READER: Your hubby has a problem — eventually he'll run out of costumes.

If all he does is dress up once a year, he probably isn't a real cross-dresser; that is, his preference doesn't reflect severe sexual disorientation. I'm not sure in what way you want to help him. Perhaps you can make a game out of his autumn 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 be

uncomfortable. In this instance, you both might benefit from some counseling.

DEAR DR. GOTT: What is your opinion about mineral ice? I have a shoulder problem that seems to be helped by this.

DEAR READER: Mineral ice is a compound that becomes cold due to a chemical reaction. It is easier to use and is less messy than ordinary ice packs. The application of mineral ice (and regular ice) helps certain conditions, such as sprains, strains, bruises and injured muscles. If mineral ice relieves your shoulder pain, you can safely use it on a regular basis.

DEAR DR. GOTT: I'm 24 and work at a stressful job. About the only way I can relieve the tension that I bring home is to hang myself upside-down over a cellar beam for 30 minutes. Is this practice at all dangerous?

DEAR READER: This type of treatment ("gravity boots") for stress enjoyed limited popularity several years ago, until doctors reported that adults who regularly hung upside-down had a higher incidence of strokes. This was believed to be caused by an inappropriately gravity-related increase in pressure within the veins around the brain. Over time, the veins could burst, causing hemorrhagic strokes.

Most people have given up this fad because of the risks. I think you, too, should. Try other techniques of stress control, such as regular exercise after work, meditation, massage or counseling.

Dear Abby

Abigail Van Buren



Advice for teens who 'fool around'

DEAR ABBY: While cleaning out some drawers, I discovered a column of yours I had clipped years ago. I'm now saving it for my great-grandchildren.

Your column has helped lots of people, and perhaps this item can save other teen-agers many heartaches and problems if you print it again. Thanks. - A GREAT-GRANDMA FROM INDIANA

DEAR GREAT-GRANDMA: You're right. It contains information every teen-ager should know — so here it is for young people who don't think things through before they do "everything but" or become sexually active:

DEAR ABBY: I weep every time I read a letter from a pregnant teen-ager pleading for help. So few people know that the sex act need not be completed for a female to become pregnant.

I was a medic in the service. When I got married, my ward doctor loaned me a medical book that he'd used in counseling young people. From that book, I learned that when a man becomes excited, a few drops of neutralizing fluid are released to neutralize any uric acid in the male urinary canal. It is nature's way of clearing a safe path for the delicate sperm cells to pass through at termination of the sex act.

Lab tests have shown that occasionally a few sperm cells are present in the fluid. This occurs most frequently in teen-agers, since that is when the male is at the peak of fertility.

Abby, please warn young people that if they plan to go beyond kissing and holding hands, they should take all necessary measures a couple would or should take in preventing

pregnancy. "Fooling around a little" can be as dangerous as going all the way.

I am a father and a grandfather who is concerned about our youth, so if this information can help someone, you have my permission to edit it any way you like. - CONCERNED GRANDFATHER

DEAR GRANDFATHER: Thank you for a lesson in sex education that may save young people from an "accidental" pregnancy they are ill-prepared to handle.

DEAR ABBY: When I read the letter from "Puzzled Mother-in-Law," I had to write. She said she and her husband traveled for three days to their son and daughter-in-law's house for Thanksgiving, and then were ignored by the daughter-in-law. She kept to herself, reading books, sewing and staying in her closed bedroom.

I am a man in my 60s, and I think you missed this one. Abby. This behavior happened to me with two of my sons and a couple of friends.

That daughter-in-law and their son are most likely breaking up. Their son invited them, and his wife probably told him, "They're your parents — you entertain them."

What I'm saying is, the son and daughter-in-law most likely put up a "front" for the occasion. As soon as the holiday was over, they probably went their own way. - BEEN THERE. SEEN THAT, SUN VALLEY, NEV.

DEAR BEEN THERE: You certainly had a different take on this than I had, and you could be right. If I hear from the mother-in-law and you are correct, I'll print the letter. Thank you for the input.

TWEEN 12 & 20

Robert Wallace, Ed.D.



Kissers, fighters get same punishment

DR. WALLACE: My girlfriend and I received an hour's detention just for kissing between classes. Big deal! Our school has a rule that forbids students to kiss or show other forms of affection on school grounds. People who fight on school grounds are given detention. People who show affection also are given detention. Since everybody would agree that kissing is better than fighting, don't you feel that giving kissers and fighters the same penalty is a bit ridiculous? If I had enough money to hire a lawyer, I'm sure I'd win my case. - Ted, Anaheim, Calif.

TED: School principals know what's best for their students when it comes to discipline. When I was a high school principal, fighters were not given detention. They were suspended up to five days, depending on the circumstances. Kissers and huggers were asked to refrain from being amorous on campus. The negative of being amorous is that those hugging and kissing usually impede the flow of foot traffic and, in many cases, wind up being tardy for their next class. The "love couple" often seemed to lose track of time while lost in an embrace.

DR. WALLACE: I'm 16 and Lyle is 19. We dated two months before he was sent to jail for seven months for selling cocaine.

Last week Lyle was released and we are once again starting a relationship. My parents are very upset. They don't want me dating a drug-dealing ex-con. What they don't understand is that Lyle has changed. He told me he became religious while in jail and says he was fortunate he was sent to jail because, if he hadn't spent time in jail, he'd proba-

bly still be selling drugs. I really like Lyle and feel he deserves another chance. He did the crime and paid his time and is a completely different guy. What can I do to get my parents to see that the new Lyle is a super guy? I've tried to get them to meet him, but they won't. - Nameless, Lodi, Calif.

NAMELESS: Allow me to be blunt! Very few parents would be happy to have their daughters dating a convicted drug dealer, regardless of the fact that he is a "changed" individual who has paid his debt to society. Take your parents' advice and allow Lyle to get on with his life — with someone else.

DR. WALLACE: Please allow me to respond to the letter from the teen whose dear friend died from leukemia. I, too, lost my best and dearest friend — my mother. Her very sudden death nearly destroyed my life. I wanted to die. I couldn't eat or sleep and I was angry at the world. I lost all faith in the Almighty.

At the funeral I heard the words "time heals" so many times it made me ill. But do you know that those people were right? I have very fond memories of Mom and I know she wants me to live a full and happy life. I thank God I didn't take my life as I had planned. The happy thoughts I have of my mother give me strength and direction.

Teens, if you have suffered a great loss in your life, don't give up. Time does heal and rewards you with wonderful memories. - Ramona, Huntington Beach, Calif.

RAMONA: Thanks for sharing your thoughts to help our teen readers. Nobody says it better than a teen who has "been there."

The Senior Forum

Kent S. Collins



Discuss estate valuation with accountant

Question: I am executor for my brother's estate. When he died, his mutual funds were worth about \$280,000. Now, because the stock market has crashed, those mutual funds are worth about \$230,000. Can't I put them into his estate paperwork at the lower value? - J.D.

Answer: Wait! Stop what you are doing! Where's the accountant? Who is the lawyer? What heirs are apparent? The answer you seek is in consideration with those people.

Basically, you are on to something here. And other executors for estates that have suffered loss-of-value as the market declined — it hasn't yet crashed — should take note, too.

Any estate and inheritance taxes due are figured on the value of those mutual funds and other assets at the time of death. But the lawyer and accountant can help you determine if the estate qualifies for valuation on a later date — as much as six months later. And in some situations assets can be valued based on the date and price they are sold or dis-

tributed to heirs.

But this kind of calculation gets complicated because lowering the valuation for estate distribution purposes may boost the capital gains taxes due when heirs sell those assets. Don't be too quick to cheapen the estate valuation. Where's the accountant? Who is the lawyer? What heirs are apparent?

When you find the accountant and contact the lawyer, also discuss with them:

Deducting expenses for settling the estate. Fees to that accountant and lawyer, your fee, cost of appraising real estate and personal property can be deducted.

If it is best to deduct those estate settlement expenses from the estate taxes or from the estate's federal income tax return.

Whether or not any of this matters, consider the total value of the estate beyond those mutual funds. A spouse can generally inherit it all for nothing. And an estate less than \$675,000 can go — be distributed — for nothing, no estate taxes

Mother, daughter not the typical rat and mouse fans

• Founders of the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association

By PAT MURKLAND
The Press-Enterprise
Scripps Howard News Service

Some people believe "102 Dalmatians" are a phenomenon found only in a Disney movie.

Not the Hauser family. They've been seeing spots for years.

At their home in Pedley, Calif., they've had Dalmatians and more: English variegated, Russian blues, Siamese, at one time counting easily 100, surely even 102... Not dogs. Not cats.

Rats. Mom Geri Hauser and her daughter Karen Robbins, are more than rat fans.

They're the driving force behind the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association. They teach people the possibilities of a good life with rodents.

The rats they fancy are called fancy rats. These aren't wild rats or plague rats. They aren't the rats of horror movies.

They are rats that compete in shows like purebred dogs and cats. They are pets whose owners dote on them, snapping their picture as they snooze on the living room couch or cuddle with the kids.

Hauser, 65, the club secretary-treasurer, developed the Dalmatian in the 1980s. It's a type of rat that's spotted like the dog breed.

Her 41-year-old daughter is the big cheese: club founder, president and tireless promoter of rats. "She's the one who started everything," her mom said.

Robbins evolved from one rat — a baby rat she saved from her sister's pet snake in 1974 — to a life revolving around rats.

With support from her mom and sister, she formed the nonprofit rat and mouse group in 1983. Soon they were holding rat shows modeled after those in England. Robbins became a judge.

She met her husband, Craig Robbins, 54, at a rat show.

They've been married 8-1/2 years. Their rodentia lifestyle in their San Fernando Valley home includes four pet "house rats." Another 76 show rats live in "the rat room."

When Craig Robbins is not at work as a radio engineer, he serves as a show-rat photographer. He also is "ratmaster" of the club's elaborate Web site, www.afirma.org, and helps his wife publish the club's magazine-style quarterly, "Rat and Mouse Tales."

Karen Robbins visits schools, fairs and other public arenas to promote rats. A lot of the work of the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association goes toward ridding rats of their ratty reputation.

The TV show "Animal Planet" recently featured her and several four-footed friends. She and her mom organize a roster of about 15 shows and displays a year throughout Southern California.

This year's planned shows include the association's annual fancy rat and mouse competition on Jan. 13 in Bloomington in San Bernardino County, and the pet-oriented Valentine's show, with costume contests, on Feb. 17 in Woodcrest in Riverside County.

Louise Stack of Covina, Calif., went to a show nine years ago to learn more about caring for her daughter's pet rat. Now she's the club membership representative, looking to add to the international list of 180 members.

The Hauser-Robbins team keeps the club running, Stack said. "They're really organized and really into it. They just really love rats and

educating people about rats."

The other day, the mother-daughter team gave Rachel Dutch, 8, some advice on rat care when she came with her mom to Pedley to buy supplies from the club for her new pet rat, Misty.

Rachel's mom, Darlene, said she wasn't happy at first about having a rat in their home in Woodcrest, Calif. But Misty seems to have won her over.

"A rat's like having a little dog," Karen Robbins told them. "They're smart." She rattled off rat traits: You can train rats. They're pets that don't take up much space. Rats wash themselves the way cats do. "And they're really clean."

Show rats come in six varieties, such as standard, with "short, smooth, glossy hair," or satin, with a "thinner, longer coat with a lustrous sheen."

And fancy-rat coats come in 32 officially sanctioned colors, including champagne, chocolate and sky blue.

At fancy-rat shows, Karen Robbins holds each potential champion rat and turns it around as she judges by the standards "a long

racy body maintained in good weight, large bold eyes... large ears, long tapering tail" — unless, of course, it's tailless — and "an average body length of 8-10 inches."

But it's also important for rats to be nice, she said, as she and her husband let four rats scamper up and down their arms and across their shoulders.

After all, social rats are happy rats, Robbins said. "You should have your rats wherever the family is. They should be where you can play with them a lot."

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<p>3 year old female, spayed, Persian, previously owned, "Cleo" #3597</p>	<p>1 year female, Dach/Lab, previously owned, "Little Momma" #3691</p>	<p>Puppy Preschool Classes Saturdays, 9-10:30 am \$5 per class Bring your puppy for beginning training, socialization, etc.</p>	
<p>Free Dog Parenting Classes Thursdays, 7-8 pm Tips on training, behavior problems, etc. Owners only - Please leave Fido at home!</p>	<p>Pet Bereavement Session Thurs., Jan. 17, 7 pm Professional counselor to help attendees with the grief process</p>	<p>Free Dog Parenting Classes Thursdays, 7-8 pm Tips on training, behavior problems, etc. Owners only - Please leave Fido at home!</p>	
<p>Closed Monday, Jan. 15 In observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday</p>	<p>Winter is here! Make sure your outdoor pet has adequate shelter and fresh water at all times! Better yet, bring your pet indoors!</p>		

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