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The mysterious rise in meat allergies

DEAR DR. ROACH: I heard that there is a sudden surge in people coming down with severe meat allergies. Is there any information as to why, after years of eating red meat, you suddenly can become extremely allergic? — E.V.

ANSWER: Meat allergies are uncommon; however, there has been a recent surge of meat allergies due to tick bites. I have read that over 5,000 cases of meat allergy have been estimated in the United States, mostly in the Southeast. The allergy is most often caused by a bite of the Lone Star tick, which carries the carbohydrate alpha-gal. If introduced into the bloodstream, it can cause a reaction from eating meat, especially beef, pork and lamb. Interestingly, it is much more likely in people with blood types A and O.

It isn't yet clear if the allergy will be temporary or long-lasting, but it can be very severe, and people who develop this allergy should avoid meat and carry an epinephrine device in case of exposure.

DEAR DR. ROACH: A few days ago, I heard a report on breast cancer recurrence. I had cancer in my left breast in 1995, and on my right side in 2003. What are your thoughts on the subject? There is no history of breast cancer in my family. — P.M.

ANSWER: Breast cancer sometimes runs in families, but 70 percent to 80 percent of women with breast cancer have no family history. Once a woman has had breast cancer, she is at higher risk for developing a second breast cancer. Survivors of breast cancer should get regular physical exams and mammograms.

A team of researchers from Johns Hopkins University recently published a study promising that in the near future, a new type of blood test may be able to identify DNA from breast cancer cells and find recurrence much earlier than current methods. If confirmed, this would be a big relief to the many women (and a few men) with breast cancer at risk

for recurrence.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Would you please address stem-cell treatment for a torn rotator cuff? My son is facing his second surgery for this problem and is considering stem-cell treatment instead. He had such terrible pain from surgery the first time. — L.P.

ANSWER: A torn rotator cuff is a common sports injury in athletes. Complete tears usually are repaired surgically. A new surgical technique is to inject the body's own stem cells. (obtained from the bone marrow) to help promote healing. It is too new of a technique for me to be able to compare it with standard surgical therapy, but the preliminary studies are very promising.

I often have said that only an individual's surgeon can decide the right surgical procedure, based on far more information than we could include in this column. It's really true that you never trust anyone quite the way you trust your surgeon. There are surgeons who are using the stem-cell technique, and it would be reasonable to get a consultation with one of them.printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

King Crossword **ACROSS**

Let the cat out of the bag Culture medium Seek damages Frost Contemptible 29 30 31 Moreover Saharan 16 Sculpted head 18-wheeler Pedestal part 46 47 "The Greatest" Fisherman's hope 52 53 TV watchdog org.

51 Freddy's

street

52 -- gin fizz

about

54 Billboards

opening

1 Actor Pitt

2 Old Italian

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comfort

53 Lounge

55 Repair

56 Narrow

Away from NNW In a just manner Certainly

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Aromatic resin Brawl

with "out" Scoot Alger's "before"

50 Thought

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3 In the thick of 4 State of great Lends a hand 5 Monastery Pruritus

Supplement, **DOWN**

6 France, once Francis' home 35 Stamina

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10 "-- Lang 11 Advantage Syne" Sideshow per- 41 Pirate treaformer's cot? sure, in part 43 Pedestal 22 Cape Glitch

24 occupant 25 White lie 45 "American --- " 26 Khan title 46 Sandwich 27 Not up to par shop 29 Blunder 47 Sodium 30 Greek vowel

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SALOME'S STARS

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) A more harmonious aspect favors all relationships. Family ties with mates and children are strengthened. Libra is Cupid's choice to win the amorous Aries' heart.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) The bold Bull is ready to take on fresh challenges. Expect some opposition as you plow new ground — but supporters will outnumber detractors.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) An upcoming job change could mean uprooting your family to a far-distant location. Weigh all considerations carefully before making a decision one way or the other.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) A long-standing problem is resolved by

a mutually agreed upon compromise. You can now focus on getting the facts you'll need for a decision you'll soon be asked to make.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) The Big Cat needs to be wary of what appears to be a golden investment opportunity. That "sure thing" could turn out to be nothing more than a sack of Kitty Glitter.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) You give of yourself generously to help others, but right now you must allow people to help you. Confide your problems to family and trusted friends.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Relationships benefit from a strong harmonious aspect. Things go more smoothly at work. Someone you thought you'd never see again asks for a reconciliation.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) A minor distraction interferes with travel plans, but the delay is temporary. Meanwhile,

expect to play peacemaker once

again for feuding family members. SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Keep that positive momentum going on the home front. Arrange your schedule to spend more time with your family. You'll soon

have news about that job change. CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Control that possessive tendency that sometimes goads you into an unnecessary display of jealousy. You could be creating problems where none currently exist.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) A new project holds some challenges you hadn't expected. But don't be discouraged; you'll find you're more prepared to deal with them than you realized.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Yours is the sign of the celestial Chemist, so don't be surprised if you experience a pleasant "chemistry" betwixt yourself and that new Leo in your life.

King Crossword **Answers**

Solution time: 24 mins.

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