

The Medical Roundup

by

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1962)Can Body Weight
Be Re-Distributed?

Many women want to know how one can take weight off one part of the body and put it on another. As I tell them, if I could do that and cared to be a millionaire I soon could be one. So far as I know, no one has ever learned how to move fat from one place to another, as from the bust to the thighs.

As millions of women know, it is hard enough just to get rid of weight or, in some cases, to put it on. Many women have spent much money paying someone to try to rub weight off from some place, but expert physiotherapists tell me they do not believe it can be done.

Among many people there is a hereditary tendency to overweight, and sometimes to overweight in some particular part of the body. We have all seen women who were perfectly proportioned down to the waist, and from there on down were much too big. Then again we have seen women who had very small legs below the knees, but were much too large in the bust, or perhaps in the upper part of the back. I remember a man whose legs and arms and chest were normal in size but who had an enormous abdomen. Many a boy of 12 or 13 carries a great excess of weight around his pelvis. Sometimes this extra fat later disappears.

It is a good thing for both men and women to be careful not to put on a great deal of weight because later, if they just have to take weight off, perhaps because of the threat of heart disease or diabetes, too much of it will come out of their face to leave them looking old and wrinkled.

Abdominal Ruptures
Recently Dr. P. C. Akman from Toronto reported his experience with 500 repairs of so-called incisional hernias. Most of these ruptures came within five years after the original operation.

The youngest patient was 5 years old and the oldest was 91. The main cause for the development of a hernia years after the operation was an increase in the pressure in the abdomen such as is often due to the patient's becoming too stout. The best two things that a person can do to avoid an

incisional hernia is to stay thin, and not to smoke two packages of cigarettes a day. Dr. Akman noted that one out of five of the hernias he has seen were recurrent, which means that they came back after an operation for their repair.

The author says that many of these ruptures could be avoided by a more careful closing of the abdominal wound at the time of the first operation, perhaps with the use of strong wire sutures (stitches). In many cases the rupture was later repaired successfully even without the use of the so-called tantalum mesh (a metal screen made of a wire which is well tolerated by the person's tissues).

Sometimes the rupture is repaired with some very tough tissue (fascia lata) taken from the outside of a thigh. My own experience is that in many of these cases the hernia came because the person was a heavy smoker with a bad cigarette cough. It was his violent coughing right after the operation which tore the wound open.

Trifacial Neuralgia
Or Tic Douloureux

Hundreds of elderly women write to ask if there isn't some way in which they can be cured of their terrible tic douloureux without an operation. In this disease there are bursts of terrible pain which is like that of having a red hot needle driven into the face. Talking or chewing or walking against a cold wind may bring on an attack.

My impression is that in most cases there are only two things to do, one is to have an expert inject alcohol into the ganglion on the nerve that is causing the pain, and another is to get a neurosurgeon to operate and loosen up the covering to the ganglion. In the old days surgeons used to remove much of the ganglion, but this left a numbness that often was distressing. I understand that today the results of the new operation are much more satisfactory.

The worst thing that people can do when tic douloureux hits them is to have all of their teeth removed. This used to be practically routine treatment in the old days, but I never saw it do any good.

Sometimes the home physicians, never having seen many persons with this disease, will have doubts about the diagnosis. In that case it is a good idea to go to a big center where an expert often will make the diagnosis with one glance at the woman as she walks in.

Contrary to popular belief, every epileptic does not have seizures. Dr. Alvarez' booklet, "What Is Epilepsy?" will further your understanding of this disease. To obtain it, send 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, The Register and Tribune Syndicate, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.



FATHER AND SON—Britain's Prince Andrew, 2, looks a little glum as he sits on the lap of his father, Prince Philip, during the royal family's recent vacation stay at Windsor Castle in England. Prince Andrew is second in line as heir to the British throne. (UPI)

The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Deeny. (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

Harry B.—I firmly believe Jeff should go on the overnight trip.

Susan B.—He'll be the youngest in the group, and it's too dangerous.

Harry B.—Jeff has just become a graduate of the cub scout crowd and is now a full-fledged Boy Scout. He's been invited to accompany some of the older boys in the troop to a two-week encampment in the Adirondacks where they'll join up with a Canadian delegation. This is all in preparation for the big Jamboree, for which Jeff also hopes to be chosen.

I think it's the best thing that could happen. We live in a city apartment. The best I can do to introduce Jeff to the wonders of nature is take him to the park or to the beach. But everything is so civilized and built up that Jeff can't really learn about outdoor living. On this trip he'll have to pitch a tent, make a fire, burn a trail and get along without an electric toaster. The experience will toughen him.

Susan B.—My husband prefers not to remember that Jeff had a frightening experience two years ago at cub scout camp when he fell on a piece of broken bottle and suffered a two-inch gash in his leg. Now he's only 12, and he'll be trying to keep up with boys of 14, 15, 16. In fact, being the

The Council: Harry is one with President Kennedy in his concern about toughening the youth of America, or at least that segment of it under his control. And he'll find it a continuing problem, not only because of Susan's maternal coddling, but also because "civilization" creeps in to the most unlikely places—even the Adirondacks—to soften life for many who try to "rough it." So we cast our vote on the side Harry's argument, assuring Susan at the same time that living conditions in the encampment won't be as rudimentary as she imagines.

A favorite yarn on the subject of reconditioning a pampered child tells of the boy who asked his mother to turn off his electric blanket. "I must begin to get hardened for scout camp," he explained.

One must assume that boys who remain in scouting to age 16, some of them Eagle Scouts, haven't won their merit badges for nothing. Susan can rest assured that they've not only been well-briefed on survival techniques but may already have put their know-how to the test on previous forays against the elements. And part of Jeff's briefing, due to his age and inexperience, will certainly include directions to stay with the bunch, await instructions, be cautious rather than foolhardy. At the same time, he will not be permitted to let an impassé faze him. Out must come the hatchet or the rope-ladder or whatever else adventurous campers carry as part of their "Be Prepared" policy.

In actual fact, Scout officials bemoan the loss of many of the old outdoor challenges. They echo Harry's complaint about the inroads of civilization: How can we harden kids, asks David Dunbar of the Boy Scouts of America, when the market is loaded with camping comforts? He finds it hard to urge the primitive approach when nearby to most sites one can find heated cabins, hot showers, deep-freezers, dishwashing machines and even electric potato-peelers.

Far from dreading this trail-blazing exploration for Jeff, Susan should be hoping that he really gets a chance to use his wits and summon his ingenuity. Such chances are rare in our push-button society. He may return with new self-confidence, plus a taste for steak broiled with a little dirt on each side.

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