

CHECKUP (Continued)

some indication of poor health, you undoubtedly will come to the conclusion that it was worth all the time and effort. And if you are convinced that a periodic health examination is a worthwhile thing, you'll be back.

But what if all goes well? If the doctor tells you that you're in good shape, you may be so pleased that you decide further periodic examinations are unnecessary. You may say that you won't be back for a long time, or at least not until you have some specific complaint about your health.

Or consider a third situation which, I am sorry to say, influences far too many persons: you hear of or personally know someone who has just gone through a "complete physical," then suddenly, a few days later, drops dead or is taken to the hospital in the middle of the night. These situations do occur. There is nothing 100 percent perfect or certain about the physical procedure of a health examination. How nice it would be if that were the case, if we had reached that dreamed-of stage in medical science!

Some day we may develop an instrument that is so nearly perfect that the misfortune of a man dying suddenly after an examination will never occur. But the greatest mistake we can make is to

allow an incident like this to interfere with an intelligent understanding of the health examination. Unfortunately, most of us never hear of the many good things that really spell "preventive medicine" during the course of a health examination.

DEGENERATIVE diseases do not pop up from out of nowhere. There has to be a start. They frequently start slowly, and, just as frequently, the onset of a degenerative condition can be detected long before it gets so serious that pain or some other symptom sends you to the doctor. On this count alone, the regular health examination may help you add years to your life. If you wait for your body to send up signals indicating that it is time to go to the doctor, it may be too late.

Two cases concerning women in their late 30s come to mind. Each had had her last child about eight years earlier. Since then, neither had been to see a doctor. Both were friends.

One of them was married to a company executive who went through his first health examination and came home so enthused that he convinced his wife to have a checkup. She made arrangements for it at a nearby clinic, and the examination disclosed a badly torn and eroded cervix, a not-uncommon condition among women who have had children. A few days later, a gynecologist performed a minor operation and soon she was back home feeling greatly relieved; so much so, in fact, that she told her friend to be sure to get a health examination.

Her friend agreed it was a fine idea, but she put

it off for nearly a year until she suddenly began complaining of pains. Once again she was told to get a checkup, once again she agreed, and once again she put it off until "after the holidays." Finally, she reported to the doctor but not for a checkup—for immediate cancer surgery. Less than a year later she died, after a valiant battle. There is no doubt about this case. She would be alive today if she had gone for her checkup.

You should not go for a health examination only when you feel something is wrong. A checkup should be regular; that is, once a year. Only in this way can the doctor, who maintains your case history, make the necessary comparisons that will enable him to detect disease as early as possible. Don't forget, too, that the health examination is more than a physical audit. It is also a time of counseling and of consultation, during which the doctor wants to hear all that is on your mind. In fact, if during the consultation period you do not tell him everything that is on your mind, I would say you are losing one of the key rewards of having a health examination.

Even when there are no signs of organic disease, you may have functional troubles which you should discuss with the doctor. Perhaps you are bothered by muscle pain, excess gas, fatigue, sleeplessness, or headaches. The doctor may be able to help you acquire new habits, new modes of living that will enable you to enjoy a happier, healthier life, free of the nagging symptoms that rob you of a sense of well-being.

NIGHT-FEEDING LOCUSTS

*Into the kitchen a wild stampede;
Victuals are snatched with a locust greed.
Crackers and cheese and pickles and ham,
Peanut butter and bread and jam,
Somebody clutches a jar of mustard,
Somebody seizes a bowl of custard,
Apples, bananas, whatever is edible,
Grabbed and gone with a speed incredible.*

*Did the dam just break? Did the Martians land?
Do we have to flee with the food on hand?
Ah, no, the cause is a simpler one:
I just got the dinner dishes done!*

—Georgie Starbuck Galbraith



"The most amazing thing happened to me, Harry," a man told his friend breathlessly. "About nine o'clock last night, I told my wife: 'Let's take out the sailboat.' Around a quarter past nine, we started out. Beyond the breakwater, the boat capsized. We would have drowned, but a passing whale let us get on his back and brought us safely to shore."

The friend was convulsed with laughter, much to the annoyance of the storyteller. "Why laugh?" he asked indignantly. "What don't you believe about the story?"

"That part about your wife getting ready by quarter past nine!"

—Joseph Federico



Quips and Quotes

The man who builds a better mousetrap these days puts a motor on it and sells it as a foreign car.

—Gordon E. Thatcher

JUST A FEW BRIEF WORDS ABOUT...

"Ladies and gentlemen, I present you with a man who needs no introduction, James K. Finnacle, and I don't need to tell you that he is the inventor of the Finnacle Process. Everybody here knows what that is, so I won't waste time describing it. It's a process whereby glue is made more adhesive."

"Mr. Finnacle has other achievements, including authorship of *A Better Way*, whose theme is well-known to all of you, I'm sure. It is concerned with methods for preventing snapshots from curling. Mr. Finnacle's favorite hobby is nationally known, so there is no need to inform you it's flower-raising. His specialty is common knowledge. Petunias."

"Distinction seems to run in the Finnacle family, and it is unnecessary to mention the professional name of his gifted wife—Sarah Penshaw, I mean. Before an audience like this, it is superfluous to mention what brought her distinction. In the first place, Sarah..."

—Parke Cummings



"I'm doing swell in Latin. I get about three notes a class."