

Pelvic exam should be part of older women's physicals

Dear Women Readers who are older than 60: Today I want to impress upon you the importance of having a pelvic exam as part of your yearly physical checkup.

Many of you who have had your children delivered at home have never had a pelvic examination. Others think it is not necessary for women over the childbearing age or for women who have had a hysterectomy.

This part of your body should not be overlooked. Genital changes and disease processes are common in older women, but many can be corrected and managed through early detection. The pelvic exam takes only a few minutes. It includes a pap test — an examination of cells from the mucosal lining of the vagina and/or cervix for the presence of cancer cells.

If it has been longer than a year since your last pelvic exam, why not pick up the phone and make an appointment as soon as possible?

Dear Jo: My father (age 81) has lived with us since my mother died two years ago. We are worried about him because he is so depressed. He stays in his room most of the time and when he joins us for meals he seldom talks and eats very little. I have noticed that he hasn't been taking his high blood pressure pills lately. This may not be important but he used to really enjoy smoking his pipe and now he doesn't smoke at all. My husband says that I am overly concerned, but frankly I am worried that he might do something drastic.

ANN Y.

Dear Ann: You have every reason to be concerned. Your father needs professional help as soon as possible. There are a lot of people who are qualified to work with depression — for example, doctors, nurses, social workers, clergymen and psychologists.



gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

The highest rate of suicide occurs in white males in their 80s. The elderly account for about 25 percent of reported suicides — about 5,000 to 8,000 yearly.

In your letter you presented many clues for suicide: his depression, his withdrawal, his bereavement and his isolation. Other clues are decreased self-regard, alcoholism, induced helplessness and a desire to protect survivors from financial disaster.

You must be alert for statements from him about suicide, although a threat to commit suicide is relatively uncommon in this age group. Unfortunately, older people tend to simply kill themselves.

Perhaps when you are making the appointment for your father you could express your concerns so that he can be seen at once.

Dear Jo: I am in my late 60s and want to tell your readers about good dental care. My parents lost all their teeth in their middle years and my sister also wears dentures. All my life I brushed my teeth twice daily and saw a dentist twice a year. I have a lot of fillings and crowns in my mouth but happily I have all my own teeth.

Now I see my hygienist three times a year and I floss once a day. I feel a great sense of satisfaction about this and wanted to write you.

N.B.

Dear N.B.: Thank you for your letter and congratulations for this life-long project.

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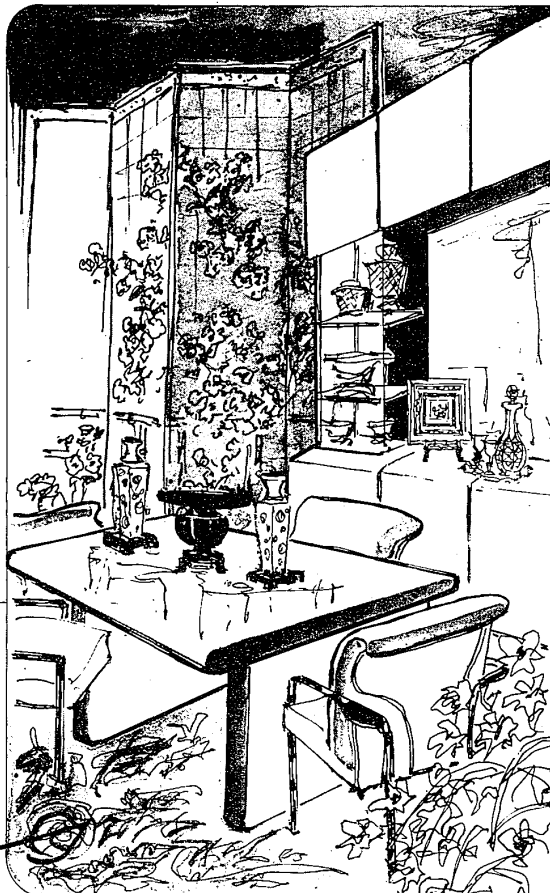
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COME MEET: David M. Parmelee. His distinguished contemporary furniture designs have been hailed as classics by Press and Public. Mr. Parmelee brings both a Harvard Graduate School of Design and a Harvard Graduate School of Business background to his observations and enterprises in Home Furnishings.



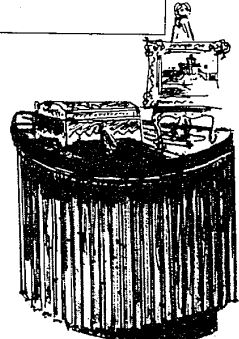
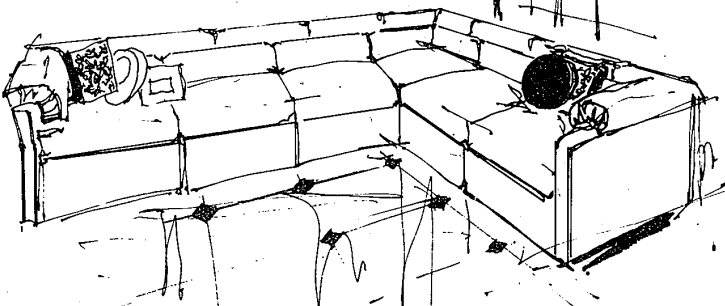
COME MEET: Phil Hart. A Pratt Institute graduate, he is continuously active as a consultant Industrial Designer, the last 15 years of such have been devoted to furniture design. Mr. Hart is a major creative force in Design today.



COME MEET: Paul Evans. He was trained as a Gold and Silversmith at Rochester Institute of Technology and later at Cranbrook Academy. Mr. Evans has recently been at work exploring man-made materials and electronics, which he has combined into furniture systems of the future.

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