

Lockjaw uncommon, but care is necessary

Dear Jo:
I was injured in a car accident and while in the emergency room, my doctor seemed to be just as concerned about a small cut above my right eye as he was about my broken wrist.

He wanted to know if I had ever been immunized against lockjaw — and when I had my last booster shot, is lockjaw something people should be worried about?

D.M.
Dear D.M.:

Although lockjaw (tetanus) is uncommon in North America it is something that should be of concern to older people. According to Centers for Disease Control, two-thirds of all tetanus cases occur in adults over age 50 and three-fourths of these persons die as a result of the disease.

Earlier in this century all age groups had the same tetanus death rate; now it is 25 to 50 times greater in older persons. Apparently this change reflects the focus of tetanus immunization programs which is directed toward children and military personnel and not toward adults in general. Older women who may not have been benefited by either of these programs are very much at risk.

Your doctor was quite right to be concerned about your cut as it may have been infected with the tetanus bacteria (clostridium tetani) that can infect any minor cut — although it prefers deep puncture wounds.

The symptoms of this disease are restlessness, irritability, headache, abdominal and back pain — along with pain and stiffness in the jaw that eventually progress to rigidity and an inability to open the mouth; hence the description name lockjaw.

To prevent tetanus, all wounds should be cleaned immediately with an antiseptic. And since the disease occurs exclusively in persons who have not been immunized, persons over age 50 should check their medical records to ensure that they have had the initial immunization that consists of three consecutive injections over a period of about year. For continued protection a booster shot is necessary every 10 years.

Persons of any age, who are not sure whether or not they have been

gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

Immunized — and those who have not had a booster for more than 10 years should discuss the subject at their next physical checkup.

Dear Jo:
Could you give me some suggestions on how to keep my skin young and healthy looking as I grow older?

Dear Mrs. S.:
To keep your skin in good condition, the most important thing you can do is to avoid sunbathing. If you have to spend time outdoors in the summer, wear a sun screen.

Sunscreen is oils, creams, gels or lotions that scatter or absorb ultraviolet light. When buying this product, be sure to note the sun protection factor (SPF) that appears on the label. The higher the number the greater the protection.

A SPF of 8 to 15 is recommended for maximum protection. To be effective, sunscreens should be applied at least a half hour before going out into the sun and must be reapplied after swimming or perspiring.

Other ways to maintain your healthy looking skin are: always wear gloves when using detergents or other strong household agents; use a moisturizer over your entire body after bathing; wear soft clothing that has been washed in a mild detergent — even some fabric softeners can cause skin irritation or itching; and lastly, see your dermatologist regularly.

Researchers are investigating the changes that take place as the skin grows older. Hopefully in your lifetime, they will come up with some significant findings that will help keep the skin young and healthy looking well into old age.

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at P.O. Box 68, Postal Station, G., 1075 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Living together most disquieting

THEY WANTED to be married. They had set a date. They had rented a hall. They were ready to send out the invitations. They were looking for a church.

They were not members of the parish I serve as pastor. They were planning to move into the area after they were married. Their address indicated they were living together.

It's a common occurrence in the life of clergy. With an increasing number of people not actively affiliated with institutional religion, the search for religious services for marriage is intensified. Some churches openly encourage the use of their services and facilities. Others are more restrictive.

ARRANGING FOR the facilities and services of institutional religion for a marriage event after having selected a date and rented a reception hall is disquieting. It certainly identifies the couples' primary concerns. Church selection may well end being an issue of calendar instead of doctrine and faith.

Far more disquieting, however, is



Rev. Lloyd Buss

the frequent failure of couples planning for marriage to recognize and appreciate the nature of the covenant of commitment at the heart and center of wedded life. It shows up most clearly in the increasing practice of living together before marriage.

Living together before marriage is explained as a time of testing — a time to test the possibilities for a marriage that endures. It offers the experience of life together without the consequential legal and social features.

LIVING TOGETHER before marriage as a time to ascertain the possibilities of a permanent marriage is based on massive self-doubt. It can only breed more. If one doubts his/her capacity for a covenant of commitment before marriage, then how can

one overcome that same doubt in marriage?

When one doubts one's own integrity of commitment before marriage, what will be changed to trust his/her own ability to keep a commitment without a trial period, will erode their trust of each other and themselves in marriage. It's vicious circle without resolution.

The fact that couples living together want to be married is a good sign. It illustrates a degree of sensitivity for the order of community life. If they had no regard for the community, they would not bother with marriage.

PEOPLE MARRY and make covenants of commitment because community is important and we want our

lives in relationships to others to carry the values of life in community.

What is so sad is to watch people destroy the very possibilities for trust and commitment that marriage provides by trying to practice it in living together before marriage. The very doubt that created their desire to try it is the same doubt that will ultimately destroy it.

Editor's note: Last week's Moral Perspective column (Titled: "Let us be what we appear to be") indicated that Dr. Lloyd Buss was the writer. This was in error. The writer of last week's Moral Perspective column was Rabbi Irwin Groner.

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The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau (OCVB) has a current file of volunteer opportunities for more than 200 agencies. Non-profit organizations needing assistance may list with the bureau. For more information about these and other volunteer openings, call the bureau at 642-7272.

OPEN HOUSE — The bureau will hold an open house from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thurs. Sept. 5 and 10, second floor, First United Methodist Church, 1589 W. Maple, Birmingham. Visit and find an opportunity for you.

DOCENT — Enthusiastic volunteers, over 18 years, are needed to guide visitors at Cranbrook, weekdays, one-half day a week. Begin training Sept. 11. Phone 642-7272.

PACEMAKER AIDE — Area hospi-

tal needs volunteers, 21 and up, who like working with elderly persons, to perform phone transmissions to pacemaker clinic for home-bound patients. Weekdays, time flexible. Car necessary. Phone 642-7272.

CAMP FIRE HELP — The North Oakland Council of Camp Fire has openings for volunteers who enjoy working with children: Club leaders, 15 years and up, for small groups; Self-reliance course instructors, 20 years and up, to present series of one-hour lessons, once a week, eight weeks; Clerical aide for typing, filing, etc. three to seven hours a week. Phone 642-7272.

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