



The Doctor's Bag

Address questions to Dr. Arnold Werner,
c/o Michigan State University, East
Lansing, Mich.

Question: I have noticed recently that the condition called "morning mouth" is present only if I have spent the night with a woman companion. If I sleep alone, there is no problem. I have talked to others about this, and the experience seems common. Does kissing for prolonged periods of time before going to sleep cause "morning mouth"? Oral genital sex is not a factor here since it is not present.

Answer: By "morning mouth" I assume you mean that thick tongued, furry feeling most people can identify. I have never thought of it as being related to kissing before. But, I suppose that this imminently researchable question could be related to bacteria transfer, although there are a number of other possibilities. Furry mouths occur with dehydration, sometimes related to alcohol intake, mouth breathing or perhaps just talking into the wee hours of the morning. Next time you are in a position to experiment, try the following: drink a couple of glasses of water and brush your teeth before you go to sleep. I await your reply.

Question: My girlfriend has a pimple-popping fetish. The minute she see one she goes crazy and has to pop it. She is almost like a ripe fruit picker when she is hunting them down - this one is "ripe", this one will be "ripe" tomorrow. She can tell the difference between a clogged pore and an ingrown hair at 20 paces. What do

you think of this?

Answer: Over-exuberant pimple-popping can be dangerous. For instance, one can drive infection deep into the skin. On certain parts of the head, particularly around the mouth and back of the neck, such infections can drain inward and produce meningitis or a brain abscess. Admittedly this is very rare, but scarring and infections are not. A pimple about to rupture can generally be harmlessly helped on its way with very mild pressure, but vigorous squeezing is definitely bad.

For a person with frequent or severe pimples or abscesses, treatment by a dermatologist, or a general physician with special interest in this area, can be most beneficial.

If the problem is only a matter of clogged pores, this can be handled with frequent washing, use of a drying soap if the skin is especially oily, and towel drying with firm rubbing. Such a program usually prevents a build-up of oily substances and dirt which are responsible for the clogged pores.

As an aside, let me add that your girlfriend sounds like one of the many people who suffer from an alabaster statue complex. This desire for inhuman perfection flies in the face of the reality that all people have skin pores that can get clogged, and that we all defecate, urinate, and smell.

Question: From the time I have been able to flush the toilet I have been taught that I must wash my hands after I urinate. Is my penis that dirty? If I don't wash my hands will I die in some out of the way hospital from some incurable disease?

Answer: Actually, it would make more sense to wash your hands before you urinate since urine itself is sterile (unless one has an infection) and the penis is probably a heck of a lot more free of bacteria than most people's hands. I do believe you are dealing much more with a matter of esthetics than you are with microbiology.

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We heartily encourage students, faculty, and alumni to submit letters of recommendation. Only through your thoughtful nominations can the Committee reliably select from so many outstanding candidates. Some of the qualifications that could be considered include the following:

1. Command of subject and ability to communicate in the classroom;
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In short, we are asking: Why is your nominee an excellent faculty member?

Letters of nomination should be sent by U. S. or campus mail to:

NCNB Award Committee
c/o Office of Academic Affairs
UNCC
Charlotte, North Carolina 28223

Due Date: April 11, 1975

Yours sincerely,

NCNB Award Committee