

Advice & More

Surgery decision between doctor, patient

Dear Abby: My new doctor has told me I'm considered morbidly obese. We discussed the yo-yoing weight problems I have had since I was a child, and she said I'd be a good candidate for gastric bypass surgery.

My husband is super-supportive of the idea and so is the rest of my family. My mother even suggested I encourage my sister — who is even heavier than I am — to research it. But when I mentioned it to my mother-in-law, "Evelyn," she was not thrilled.

Evelyn is the only other overweight person in the immediate family here in Maryland. I suspect that she doesn't want to be the only heavy person in the family if I have the surgery. Her husband wants to be active and do things.

He does them with my husband and me because Evelyn can't. I know this upsets her.

How can I tell her that at 28, I



Jeanne Phillips
Syndicated advice columnist

Dear Abby

want to do something about my weight problem now in order to live a long, healthy life? I don't want to end up like her when I'm older — bitter about my slimmer, healthier, more active husband doing things without me. — Dying to be Healthy

Dear Dying: This isn't about Evelyn. It is only about you and the fact that your doctor has recommended you consider this medical procedure. If Evelyn raises the subject, remind her that this is the case. And of course, omit any reference to the idea that she might be "bitter," or that her slimmer, healthier husband is doing things without

her, because it will only make her more defensive.

Dear Abby: My longtime friend Jim had a stroke several years ago. His wife was struggling to keep him at home while working, taking care of the house, cooking and doing other endless chores. She found it difficult even to get out of the house for a haircut. She confided to me the hurt she felt when friends never followed through on their general offers of assistance.

Our discussion led to the formation of the FOJ (Friends of Jim's) Club. Everyone in our "elite" group commits to spending two hours a month with Jim. The time slots we fill are recorded on our FOJ calendar. This time provides a needed respite for Jim's wife and an opportunity for Jim to interact with others and get out of the house. Because the time commitment is for a defined — but not overly long — period of time, people

are more willing and able to make a commitment they know they can keep.

I encourage your readers to form similar "friends clubs." They can bring light and support to caregivers as well as to those being cared for. And this gift of love will circle back. I know because I'm a ... Friend of Jim's in Champaign, Ill.

Dear Friend of Jim's: Jim and his wife are fortunate to have such a loyal and stalwart circle of friends as you and your fellow FOJ Club members. I have printed letters from time to time about random acts of kindness; yours is the most organized effort I have heard about. The gift of "self" you are giving your friend is the most precious gift one can give. And I hope it will be remembered by anyone who reads your letter.

— Write to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069, or www.DearAbby.com.

Olsen twins fashions out of sight

Associated Press

NEW YORK — When you live life as the famous Olsen twins, perhaps there's a craving for serenity and quiet. For an hour or so on Friday, Mary Kate and Ashley got just that as they set the terms of the New York Fashion Week spring preview for their label The Row.

An almost all cream collection — with just hints of seafoam green, ice blue and beige — was shown in a sparse space in a no-man's-land neighborhood on Manhattan's West Side.

There were just a few wooden benches for guests, who numbered in the dozens instead of the hundreds that could be found at the main fashion hub of the Lincoln Center tents.

The designers didn't appear on the runway, choosing to let their clothes speak for themselves. (One could actually hear each step the models took in their flat white sandals.)

The first look put a delicate drawstring-waist tunic over long, fluid pants, a chic combination for a woman who has places to wear light, flowing clothes — and not worry about a dry-cleaning bill.

It set the tone for a series of delicate but not overly frilly or feminine outfits that moved from more daytime pants of varying lengths to embellished cocktail dresses, including a beaded-top kimono.

There was an easy elegance here, although the bathrobe-style jacket over pajama pants seemed too far to that extreme.

Straightening out no flour, no sugar diet

Dear Dr. Gott: I just started using your No Flour, No Sugar diet, and while it is a challenge, I am working through the first few weeks to get used to it.

I have a few questions I hope to get answered. I am a Type 2 diabetic and have already noticed changes in my blood sugar.

First, the book says that jelly is not allowed, but makes no mention of sugar-free jelly.

Is this OK?

Second, I have corn tortillas that use only ingredients that are allowed.

But I have also found low-carb wraps that have half the carbs, more fiber and more protein than the corn tortillas.

They also have zero sugars, and the calories and fat are similar.

The ingredients do list stone-ground whole-wheat flour, soy flour and sesame flour, so does that mean they are automatically disqualified from the diet?

Third, is sushi allowed?

Finally, I have been told that many Chinese food dishes contain sauces that have flour added



Peter Gott
Syndicated medical columnist

Dr. Gott

as a thickening agent.

Do you know any specifics on this at all?

Reader: The great thing about my diet is that you can adjust it to suit your needs or wants.

As you cut out sugar and flour, you will likely experience some cravings, but these will lessen with time.

After meeting your weight-loss goal, you can slowly introduce some flour and sugar back into the diet or continue to avoid it as you had been doing.

Even during dieting, if you find a healthful alternative such as your low-carb wraps that you prefer over a no-flour option, use them.

Just remember that moderation is the key.

If you consume a wrap on

Monday, have a no-flour alternative on Tuesday, etc.

Now to your specific questions. Sugar-free jelly is allowed, in moderation, of course.

Some individuals have reportedly found that sugar substitutes can have unwanted side effects, such as headache, gas and diarrhea, so they should be used sparingly.

As a general rule, flour isn't allowed, but based on my above statements, the rules can be bent. Another alternative is bread or wraps made from sprouted grains. You can also find sprouted-grain cereals, pastas and more. Some brands add flour, so it is important to read the label carefully.

As for sushi and Chinese dishes, I'm afraid I cannot provide a satisfactory response, as I do not consume either. Sushi is typically vinegared rice, raw or cooked fish or seafood, and vegetables, so I assume most is allowable.

As for the Chinese food, I suggest you make it at home yourself so you can control what ingredients go into the making.

If you order take-out, simply ask if flour or sugar is included in the dish.

Those interested in purchasing my books that contain countless recipes ("Dr. Gott's No Flour, No Sugar Diet" and "Dr. Gott's No Flour, No Sugar Cookbook") can do so at most bookstores or by visiting my website, www.AskDrGottMD.com, to learn how to purchase them directly.

Readers who are interested in learning more can order my Health Report "Losing Weight: An Introduction to the No Flour, No Sugar Diet" by sending a self-addressed, stamped No. 10 envelope and a \$2 U.S. check or money order to Dr. Peter Gott, P.O. Box 433, Lakeville, CT 06039. Please note that the Health Report is NOT the book; it is merely a concise overview of the diet.

Be sure to mention the title when writing, or print an order form from my website's direct link, www.AskDrGottMD.com/order_form.pdf.

— Write to Dr. Peter Gott, P.O. Box 433, Lakeville, CT 06039.

Daughter sacrificed her life for mother

Dr. Wallace: So much is on my mind.

I am filled with emotions from the tragic loss of our 24-year-old daughter two years ago from a head-on collision with a drunk driver.

Meagan turned the wheel, taking the brunt of the hit, sacrificing her life for mine.

She died instantly on impact. I lived.

The drunken driver lived.

After reading your column from 19-year-old Caroline who said she could drive without being impaired after a couple of beers, I have decided to direct my comments to you and say, "Thank you" for responding to her as you did ("Even one drink will impair a driver to some degree.")

Choices have consequences,



Robert Wallace
Syndicated advice columnist

Between 12 & 20

and I hope her choices of drinking and driving don't destroy a life before she understands this. — Rebecca, Batavia, Ill.

Rebecca: Automobile crashes are going to happen.

When two vehicles collide, we judge it as an accident when the driver at fault was not impaired with alcohol or other drugs.

But when the driver was impaired with alcohol or other drugs, the crash was avoidable and unforgivable.

It is easy to point a finger at teens and blame peer pressure

and youthful exuberance for their drinking and driving behavior, but sadly, the blame for this unacceptable behavior is a major adult crime that encompasses adults of all ages, races, religions and occupations.

I realize that driving after consuming alcohol is not a crime if the driver tests under the legal limit by a breath analyzer.

But our nation would be much safer if driving after drinking would be considered a menace to public safety.

Dr. Wallace: I work in a convenience store on the weekends while I attend community college.

I've heard that a new law mandates a big fine for selling cigarettes to a minor.

My employer said if I got caught selling cigarettes to a

minor, I'd have to pay the fine myself.

How much is it? — Ryan, Oakland, Calif.

Ryan: Under the new law, retailers must check the identification of everyone under age 27 who wants to purchase a tobacco product, including chewing tobacco. A person must be 18 or older to purchase tobacco products legally.

Retailers caught selling to someone under 18 can be fined \$250 for the first violation; the fines can go as high as \$15,000 for multiple violations.

You can be fired for selling tobacco products to underage teens, but the fines are not your responsibility.

The retailer must pay them. — Write to Dr. Wallace at rwallace@galesburg.net

STAR Foundation celebrates graduation

Posted by Ellen Murphy

STAR Foundation held its 3rd Quarter Graduation Ceremony on Sept. 1.

Nineteen students successfully completed the eight-week Employment Readiness Program, with seven of the students achieving perfect attendance.

This marks the 61st graduation for the STAR program.

If you are experiencing difficulty in finding employment, need to turbo charge your resume, want to really dazzle your future employer at the next job interview, and would like to learn how to use a computer, then you should apply for the next class, which will begin in October.

Registration is required.

For additional information about the program, please visit the STAR Foundation located at 1907 Gloucester Street, Brunswick, call 554-0540,

One can also visit the foundation's website at www.star-foundation.org to complete an application form.

Pictured are Lakeisha Dyal,



front row from left, Darlene Boggs, Britney Liphtratt, Valerie Slaughter, Beverly Hudson, Charlotte Brockington, Katie Orrel, instructor, Shawn Miller.

On the back row, Ivory Small, from left, Ahmed Musah, Dianne Nash, Ellen Murphy, STAR Foundation director, Shemeka Canty, Stacey Merrell, Rashica

Singleton, Divina Canasa, Joe Cobb, Katey Griffis, Lynn Adams, Bobby Batson, Terresiah Johnson, Peter Boyton, instructor).

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