

Adviser

FATHER KNOWS BEST

ROSS BRUNDRETT HELPS YOU SOLVE SOME IMAGINED, YET TRICKY, FAMILY PROBLEMS

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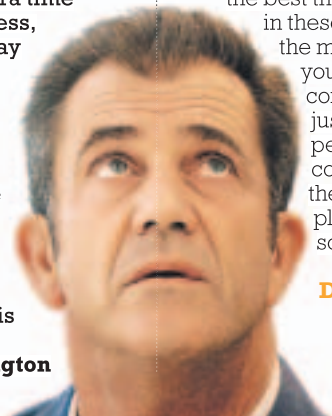
Q My wife is talking about plastic surgery. In fact, she is demanding plastic surgery and says she will be miserable without it, which is her way of saying I will be made miserable as well. What worries me is she is 36 and I am 59, so if the plastic surgery makes her look younger, the age difference between us will be even more pronounced than it already is. And already people confuse me for her father, so I can't see any way of getting out of this still hanging on to my dignity and my wife.

Stressed to the Max, Balwyn

A It all comes down to damage control, if you don't mind me saying. The little lady sounds hell-bent on going under the knife so you are probably right when you feel you can't stop that from happening. That being the case, you will indeed find yourself with an even younger-looking wife, admittedly one who cannot frown or offer any real facial expression. That leaves one option; get some work done on your face. That way, instead of looking like a young girl and sugar daddy freak show, you will look like a couple ... a well-preserved couple.

Q After 20 years of marriage and three kids, we recently sold our interest in a business and I thought that with the extra time on our hands and less stress, life would return to the way it was when we were a young couple in love. But it hasn't worked out that way. My husband shows no interest in anything I do and didn't even notice the new sexy nightie I wore recently. The only time he gets excited in the bedroom is when the telly is on and Richmond is winning. Any ideas?

Moaning, Mornington



Does my hair look that bad? Mel Gibson has a problem similar to our reader's

PILLOW TALK

LYNDA CARLYLE ANSWERS YOUR SEX, LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS QUESTIONS

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Q I AM 32 and very much in love with my partner of two years. The only thing we argue about is how often we have sex. What can I do?

A THERE are useful comparisons between sexual desire and hunger. For a start, be realistic — you're not going to feel like the same dish as your lover every night. If your partner has a big appetite and you're not that hungry, you're going to be full before they are. If they try to force feed you, do you think you'll ever develop an appetite? Logical when you're talking about food, but not sex.

It's hard to negotiate solutions when preferences around frequency don't match up. It's one of the most common issues seen by sex therapists.

Unchecked, a toxic cat-and-mouse cycle can develop, then both partners experience the emotional fallout. Sexual differences are often perceived as a failure in the relationship. In fact, they are inevitable for every couple.

A Gee Mona, sounds as if your man might get more excited more often if he barracked for another team, but he's stuck with the Tigers so that probably won't happen. He's stuck by you as well, though, so the situation might be desperate but it's not hopeless. Instead of a sexy nightie, try wearing a Richmond guernsey to bed, preferably with Richo's number. And if all else fails, slip a Viagra into his hot chocolate.

Q Just recently my life has gone bust, my marriage broke up, I hit the bottle and got in trouble with the law, then made remarks that could have been perceived as racist by, you know, the ... dregs of the world. Anyway, now I'm trying to get my life back together and have a new sexy Russian girlfriend who is pregnant, but I'm worried that people will no longer think I'm sexy and funny like they used to, especially with my old-man haircut.

M, Malibu

A First things first. I hope that gal wasn't one of those mail-order Russian brides you hear about. That's what often happens when middle-aged men — and I'm guessing you are middle-aged — bounce back from a marriage keen to prove they are still virile. You know, sometimes the best thing to do is do nothing in these situations. Sometimes the more you try to explain yourself the sadder you come off. So try instead to just smile a lot and give people the idea you are content and not in need of the approval of others. But please, by all means, do something about the hair.



Fat-busters: magic fix or a waste of money?

WORDS SHANE BILSBOROUGH

JUMP online or visit any health food shop and the shelves are groaning with "fat-burning" products. What these products claim to do is extraordinary and include: increasing the amount of energy the body uses, decreasing the burning of "carbohydrates", increasing the feelings of fullness, increasing fat-burning and decreasing fat storage, blocking the absorption of fat you eat, and even eliminating water. To the serial dieter they provide hope in a bottle.

Though these claims seem unrealistic, most consumers put their faith in these products, creating a global multi-billion-dollar industry. But the question is, do these products actually work? Let's look at some of their secret ingredients:

BRINDLEBERRY The rind of an exotic citrus fruit, brindleberry contains the highly touted fat-burning substance "hydroxycitric acid". It is supposed to reduce fat build-up and reduce appetite. Though it sounds great, there is no support for its use in weight loss. **Verdict: Give it a miss**

CAPSAICIN The pungent ingredient in hot chillies has long been touted as a weight-loss secret. It can be found in pill form. We know that when we exercise we can sweat profusely and, given a hot enough curry, the same result can occur. Given exercise increases our metabolism, consuming any capsaicin, containing food, in theory, should do the same and in the process burn calories.

Recent evidence has shown that capsaicin supplements may play a role in increasing the body's fat-burning properties. One well-designed study showed an increase of 16.8g extra fat burned a day. Eating spicy food might also reduce food intake to the tune of a few hundred kilojoules.

Verdict: Some promising evidence, but better advice is to tuck into spicy food more regularly than go for a pill.

CAFFEINE Elite athletes often run or cycle early in the morning after a strong cup of black coffee with no sugar or milk. The caffeine helps to release more fat into the bloodstream, where exercising muscles can burn it up. For everyone else, except those with elevated blood pressure, this practice, done regularly, even if the mode of exercise is walking,

should have some effect. But when high-caffeine energy drinks are taken, studies show the body tends to burn more carbohydrate and significantly less fat. **Verdict: Good evidence for its use in people who exercise regularly.**

CARNITINE Deep within the fat-burning furnaces of each muscle cell is the enzyme carnitine, which escorts fat into the fire. So, in theory, taking carnitine supplements should melt away fat. Nothing could be further from the truth. Eighty to 85 per cent ends up in urine. **Verdict: Your body can make its own carnitine from lean meat.**

GREEN TEA EXTRACT Has been said to increase weight loss through thermogenesis (increasing body temperature) and increasing fat burning. Some studies have shown small decreases in body fat when people are on a low-calorie diet and/or exercising. But these studies have used quite large doses. **Verdict: Better health benefits can be gained from drinking green tea, but weight-loss is shown only in people who already restrict calories.**

HEALTH professionals are concerned that these over-the-counter supplements are taken with no medical guidance. When it comes to pills and powders being touted as fat burners, it's not uncommon for people to think that if the recommendations suggest one teaspoon a day will burn 5kg in a week, then three or even four will burn more.

The cases of seizures, comas, liver toxicity and, in extreme cases, death from the over-consumption of these are well documented. Of even greater concern is the effect that some of these products have when they interact with conventional medicines. If you want to try a "fat burner" and are taking medication, clear it with your doctor.

The hype and claims are certainly not supported by hard evidence, though some products may have a modest effect if you are already watching your calorie intake and exercising.

Our constant search to find the magic bullet for weight loss continues, so for the moment exercise regularly and watch what and how much you eat.

* Shane Bilsborough is a nutritionist. shaneb@gettheworldmoving.com

EATING SPICY FOOD MIGHT REDUCE FOOD INTAKE TO THE TUNE OF A FEW HUNDRED KILO-JOULES

