Tabs versus Credit

When I was young, I remember being sent to the mom and pop store with a list of things to buy, but I was given no money to pay for the items. Yes, we, like so many of our neighbors, had a “tab” at the store. The end of the week, when my dad received his work pay, my mother would go and settle the account. This was not unusual years ago.

Mel and I had an account at a small department store called Feldmans. They sold furniture and clothing. In the late 40s we would go to Feldmans in the Spring and Fall to buy children’s clothes or anything else needed. We were given a book with the amount spent listed. Every week Mr. Feldman came to our home, collected $5.00 and subtracted the amount owed until the debt was paid. Sometimes I would be in the basement washing clothes; he would tap on the door, come in the house and pick up the $5.00 I left on the bookcase, mark the book and leave. Didn’t have to lock our door in those days – and no credit cards needed.

Migraines

Tension and sinus headaches are painful, but taking an aspirin or Tylenol usually eases the pain. Migraine headaches are extremely painful. There is a pounding, severe throbbing pain accompanied with nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light and noise. My mother and sister, who suffered with migraines, described the pain as someone hammering nails in their eyes and lasting for hours or all day. They would go to a darkened, noiseless room with a cold wet cloth to their eyes and head and a container close by for the retching they experience.

There is a type of migraine called migraine with aura. My daughter suffers with this migraine. This type occurs in 25-30 percent of people who suffer with migraines, making it the second most common type of migraine. It is also possible for the aura to occur on its own without headaches following it.

The symptoms of the aura include: light flashes, zigzag lines floating across a person’s vision, blind spots and stars and vision changes. This is also numbness in the face, slurred speech, tingling in the face and hands and weakness in the muscles, all occurring on only one side.

The cause of migraines with aura is not clear, however, it is believed to be a chemical or electrical wave that moves across the brain’s visual cortex. Treatment of all migraine headaches is generally the same, with prescription medication.
Moles

Moles are growths on the skin that are usually brown or black. They can appear on the skin alone or in groups. Most appear in early childhood and during the first 25 years of a person’s life. It is normal to have between 10-40 moles by adulthood.

Moles occur when cells in the skin grow in a cluster instead of being spread throughout the skin. These cells are called melanocytes and these cells make the pigment that gives skin its natural color. Moles may darken after exposure to the sun during teen years, and during pregnancy.

As the years pass, moles usually change slowly, becoming raised and/or changing color. Sometimes, hairs develop in the mole. Some moles may not change at all while others may slowly disappear over time.

Sidebar: Years ago, it was a fad for women to place a fake mole on the skin at their cheekbone near the eye or on the cheek at the side of their mouth. They called them “beauty marks.”

Freckles

Just what are those tiny spots that are sprinkled over faces, shoulders and other sun-exposed skin on some people and are hated by teenagers, especially females?

Freckles are tiny flat spots that form on the skin after exposure to the sun. The scientific name for them is ephelides. They are different from moles and age spots, often appearing in the summer and fading in the winter, but not always – especially if you have a lot of them.

Melanin is what gives your skin its color or pigmentation, and it also protects you from the sun. Fair skin people have less melanin than those with darker complexions and for this reason they are more sensitive to the sun. If you have a family history of freckles or if you had a bad sunburn you will develop freckles.

When our son, John, was about eight years old my parents took him to Rocky Point Park for the day. Not realizing John, who was fair skinned, light hair, and blue eyed, was sensitive to the sun, allowed him to float on an inner tube in the water too long. John developed a bad case of “sun poisoning” on the back of his legs and his back. John was unable to walk a few days, lying on his stomach and the need of a foam-sprayed medication on the burns. John has numerous freckles on the back of his legs and wears sun-protective clothes when in the sun.

I am always amazed at this wonderful creation we have – our body.
Those Ugly Warts

Common warts are actually an infection in the top layer of skin caused by viruses in the human papillomavirus (HPV) family. When the virus invades this outer layer of skin, usually through a tiny scratch, it causes rapid growth of cells on the outer layer of skin creating a wart. We all come in contact with it, such as shaking hands, turning door knobs or typing on keyboards.

If you have any type of skin wart, it means you came in contact with a wart-causing virus sometime in the past, though it could have been months ago. People get warts with other people with warts. No, you don’t get warts from frogs or toads. The most common way is direct skin-to-skin. You can also get the virus from objects, like towels.

Small cuts or biting your fingernails may bring on a wart. Cuts and nicks from shaving may provide a place for an infection.

Why do some people get them and others don’t? Doctors aren’t sure, but they believe that certain individuals have immune systems that are more apt to fight off viruses and prevent warts from growing. The most important thing when you see a wart is to get rid of it immediately.

Every wart is a mother wart that can have babies. You can start with home remedies or wart removers from the drug store. Try salicylic acid or clear nail polish or tape or any method that suffocates the virus. When using the salicylic acid, be sure to follow directions and realize it may take several weeks to several months to remove the entire wart.

Sidebar: I have to tell you about my sister, Elaine, and her wart. Elaine, when in third or fourth grade developed a wart at the top of one of her nose nostrils. Not a very good place to have a wart. My mother bought some type of a medical stencil to put on the wart to remove it. The problem was, the application caused the wart to turn black and where it was located, caused a lot of teasing and laughing by her schoolmates. Elaine endured a lot of embarrassment until the wart was gone.

Another Skin Nuisance

I feel as if my body has become a garden and is growing all types of things that are no good for harvesting. I’ve had moles, freckles, age spots, cancers, a wart, tumors, and some things that have no names. I’m afraid to rub my arms as my hands may come upon something, like a skin tag.

Skin tags can appear smooth or irregular, and may attach to the skin by a short narrow stalk called a “peduncle.” Doctors don’t know what causes them, but skin rubbing against skin may play a role since the growths usually occur among the skin folds — in the armpits, neck, groin, and sometimes on the eyelids and under the breasts. They are harmless growths that can vary in numbers from one to hundreds. I had one on the nape of my neck, probably caused by the collars of my blouses rubbing the skin. I did have it removed as the rubbing would cause it to bleed. The only tags I want are those attached to new clothes.
What Happens When We Are Scared?

You read about someone being trapped under a car, a man runs to the car and actually lifts the car off the man enabling him to be rescued. You wonder where the man got the strength to lift that car.

The driver of a car sees a deer crossing a road. The deer has time to reach the other side, but he sees the car and freezes, causing the deer to be struck by the car. Now why did he stop?

Fear starts with a trigger. When something frightening happens, like someone jumping out at you in a haunted house, that’s a stimulus that signals to your brain that you are in danger. Whether the stimulus is touch, sight, or sound, the scary signal quickly reaches the thalamus at the center of the brain and travels down to the amygdala, at the base of the brain. From here the neurotransmitter called the glutamate then carries the signal even deeper into the brain. This causes us to freeze or involuntary jump – the “fight or flight” response.

When frightened, your body floods with hormone adrenaline. This skyrockets your heart and blood pressure. The hormonal surge also causes your heart to pump blood more forcefully to the muscles. That’s why you might feel a little shaky or unsteady when you’re scared – the extra blood is getting your body to sprint away from the danger or stand and fight if you need to.

Our bodies can reverse the fear response fairly quickly though. If it turns out we aren’t in a life threatening situation, the parasympathetic (PSNS) kicks in to counter the fight or flight instinct by stopping the blood adrenaline, lowering your heart back to normal and calming us down. Part of the reason the PSNS exists is because too much adrenaline can lead to heart failure or death.

Let’s see what answers we received for our questions. The man was able to lift the car because the hormones forced the heart to quickly pump blood to his muscles. The deer felt he couldn’t get across the road in time so he decided to stand there and fight his danger, the car. Hmmm, I think the deer should have taken “flight” and dashed across the road. I think the driver would agree with me.
January

Retiree’s Association of Martin Marietta Corporation

Silent RAMMs

I am not aware of any silent RAMMs at the time of this writing.

Care and Concern

Dottie Ruth is now at Gilchrist.
Keep her and all members who are ill, in your prayers.
Please notify Dick Adams (410-561-3989) of any members who are ill or have passed away so we may mention them in the newsletter.

January Birthdays and Anniversaries

Congratulations to all those having birthdays or anniversaries this month.

Dumb Things Actually Said in Court

Lawyer: “What is the meaning of sperm being present?”
Witness: “It indicates intercourse.”
Lawyer: “Male sperm?”
Witness: “That is the only kind I know.”

Lawyer: “Were you present in court this morning when you were sworn in?”

Lawyer: “And what did he do then?”
Witness: “He came home and next morning he was dead.”
Lawyer: “So when he woke up the next morning he was dead?”

Stay Healthy,
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