

health+body

Must-read news and expert advice to help protect the body you love

Easy Health Fixes

...for Four Common Little Body Issues

■ IRRITATED
Try salt water.

1. BUMPS ON YOUR TONGUE

These small white or red "tongue pimples" are actually inflamed taste buds, says Rochester, New York, dentist Ellie Phillips. Too-hot drinks, spicy stuff, acidic foods like tomatoes, or even a good jab with a chip can cause tiny abrasions of the sensitive rubs, which then become swollen and irritated. Unless the bumps spread or don't go away after 7 to 10 days, they're nothing to worry about. Simply rinse with salt water to speed healing.



2. AIRPLANE STOMACH

If you get really gassy when you fly, you're not alone. "Believe it or not, there is something that's called high-altitude flatus expulsion," says Anish Sheth, M.D., a gastroenterologist at Yale University. There's less air pressure at high altitudes, so any gas trapped inside you expands. Dr. Sheth's Rx: Don't eat anything out of the ordinary before you board (sorry, no airport Cinnabons!), and especially avoid things like soda and beans. Once you're airborne, Gas-X won't help.

3. EXERCISE ITCH

If your legs itch when you've been exercising outdoors—say, in the cool morning air—temperature is probably to blame. It's not well understood, but increased blood flow to the skin in cold air can trigger the release of histamines, the same substances released during allergic reactions. Preworkout stretches can help, as do antihistamines like Benadryl. But



if you're hitting the gym for the first time in a while and then feel the itch, it's your body's way of telling you you've been spending too much time on the couch. "During workouts, capillaries in the skin expand to make room for increased blood flow," says New York City physical therapist Andrew Barile.

"These vessels lose flexibility if you're sedentary. So when exercise forces them open, your nerves interpret the irritation as an itch." Only regular exercise will help in those cases.

4. EYELID TWITCH

That irritating eyelid spasm is a sign you are way, way too tired, says Christine Nelson, M.D., an ophthalmologist at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. "Physical exhaustion and stress can make your facial nerves fire spontaneously for no reason," she explains. In plain English: Your eyelid muscles go rogue. Just catch up on sleep and lay off caffeine—the stimulant can make muscle spasms worse. —*NIT Provest*

HEALTH ANSWERS, PLEASE!

FROM JOANN E. MANSON, M.D.



DO NOT MAKE or drag you to the doctor.

My mom had cancer at 58—now I'm afraid to see an M.D. How can I get over it?

—*C.S. HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIF.*
 What I'm going to say may seem harsh, but snap out of it! Fear is your worst enemy right now. Think about it: What's the worst that could happen if you got a checkup today?

My doctor could say that I have cancer, like my mom.

OK, there is a chance you could get that scary diagnosis, but cancer is more treatable when found early. Conversely, if you wait months to see a doc and the cancer grows, you may miss your window for a cure: Survival rates for breast cancer, for example, drop from more than 95 percent to 27 percent if the disease spreads. Now, what's the best that could happen? Your doc could give you a clean bill of health and the info you need to lower your risk. So do whatever it takes to get yourself into her office.



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Eat...more!



YOU CAN HAVE THIS
 McDonald's 5-piece Chicken Selects Premium Breast Strips (27 oz.) with BBQ sauce
 710 CALORIES, 40 GRAMS FAT

OR ALL THIS
 8-piece Chicken McNuggets (5.4 oz.) with BBQ sauce, a Caesar salad with low-fat vinaigrette and a baked apple pie
 710 CALORIES, 27 GRAMS FAT

SO REMEMBER
 When you hit fast food, portions are key. Stick with little nuggets, and you'll get a full meal plus dessert!
 —*Julie Neupert, R.D.*

health quickie Booze binges (4 or more drinks in a sitting) may increase your stroke risk by 56%, a study found.