



## remarks

### His Mother, The Doctor What does a physician do when his mother thinks she's a doctor, dispensing advice in all areas of nutrition and health?

BY JUDY MANDELL



Her obsession and the great philosophy of her life has always been “You are what

you eat!”

It began when her son was a baby. In those days, every “good” mother made absolutely sure that her child ate a healthy helping of each and every food category, every single day — i.e. milk, fruit, green vegetables, yellow vegetables, bread, meat, fish, poultry, eggs, etc.

This baby was not a good eater. She would spend hours feeding him his green beans, carrots, beef, and bananas, telling stories with each bite, flying imaginary airplanes into hangars, and driving cars into

make-believe garages. As baby opened his mouth, mommy opened hers. As he swallowed the food, she swallowed too. Occasionally the precocious little munchkin would play a trick on his mom. He would willingly accept numerous spoonfuls of food and store it in his fat cheeks, allowing mommy a few minutes of false pleasure. When he could hold no more, he would spit forth, in one tremendous gush, a

half-hour's worth of forced feeding—down his neck, on his clothes, her clothes, the walls and the floor. She immediately tried to salvage what she could by scraping it up his neck with a spoon and feed him again. (I wonder why he has such a phobia about anyone touching his neck!)

Because of the superior care given this infant, he managed to grow into a robust boy. Eventually, he could no longer

fit into regular pants and his mother had to buy “chubbies.” He went on a “sensible” diet.

When slim went to college and then medical school, his mother listened faithfully to radio health guru Carlton Fredricks and advanced her knowledge of food and nutrition.

Today, as an expert on all that goes in as well as what comes out, this mother is undeniably in a position to observe, criticize, and advise her son, the doctor.

Mom manages to keep up with the literature—*Ladies' Home Journal*, *Family Circle*, *Women's Day*, and *Time Magazine*.

She has a background of experience in bringing up two skinny, sickly children and she has a friend or a friend of a friend or a relative

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## REMARKS

*Continued from previous page*

of a friend who has had every disease known to man or every freak accident.

She can quote not only the ramifications of the above-mentioned syndromes or misfortunes, but she can tell you who the poor soul is or was, his place in his family tree, whose friend he is or was, and the symptoms or events which led up to the traumatic downfall or demise.

Don't let me mislead you into thinking that mom's information is worthless or false. She happens to know directly or indirectly many of the individuals listed in [Morbidity and Mortality](#) (the medical newsletter for physicians) as well as case histories written up in eminent medical journals—if not the exact case, then certainly an individual who had the identical disease or mishap.

For example, she knows of many two-year-old boys who have been poisoned by mothballs, Clorox, perfumes, detergents, turpentine, kerosene, matches, lead, and various other chemicals; choked to death or near death on peanuts, marbles, olive pits, balloons, coins, strings, plastic bags, and blankets; burned badly or to death by playing with matches, boiling water, spills from coffee cups, pots pulled down from stove tops, and open outdoor fires; badly injured falling out of speeding cars, falling down stairs, on pavement, on grass, on steep hills or inclines, or run over. This list could extend into volumes—and that is just for two-year-old boys.

If she observes an individual—especially a member of her family—engaged in an activity which she deems dangerous or unhealthy, she will immediately quote a case of one of her friends who succumbed from such behavior.

Most often she describes cases of friends who dropped dead on the street, in bed, while shaving, or other spots where people usually drop dead. The causes (in her opinion) of the above-mentioned deaths were directly due to eating

too much fat. Thus, anyone in her presence who so much as eats a piece of bacon (poison!) is threatened with a tremendous harangue, that is if he doesn't drop dead first.

Shoveling snow, lifting any weight over 10 pounds, running up stairs, reading in the "dark," eating unwashed fruit, sweets, or any foods with artificial sweeteners or additives, smoking, drinking, or eating in excess will all conjure up stories which are certain to make the listener stop all further activity.

How does a physician respond to such a mother, who is so knowledgeable in his field and makes no pretense or allusion to his many years of medical training and practice?

He listens, like a good boy! ■

*Judy Mandell is a free-lance writer based near Charlottesville, Virginia. She contributes to The Washington Post, The International Herald Tribune, The Denver Post, among other publications. She wrote [What To Expect In Your Fifties: A Woman's Guide To Health, Vitality, and Longevity](#) (Dell, 1998).*

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