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Direct Answers
from Wayne & Tamara

GENEROUS TO A FAULT

Q I have been living with my boyfriend for a year and a half and consider myself lucky to have such a great man in my life. However, we cannot see eye to eye on one subject!

We both grew up 1000 miles away, and my boyfriend's friends and family insist on staying with us for up to weeks at a time. We live in a vacation destination, just minutes away from a million beautiful and interesting places, but every guest is reluctant to spend a dime.

So far this spring, I've had houseguests for a total of three weeks. I really don't mind entertaining, but these people invite themselves and have no other plans than to hang out at our house every moment.

So despite working all day, I come home to a house full of hungry, messy guests to cook and clean for. Also, I feel sensitive to anyone's comments about me, my house, and my domestic skills. His mother, for example, reorganizes my cabinets while I'm at work.

Recently, I decided to stop taking an anxiety medication to see how I fare without it, but these weeks of pressure are really getting to me!

My boyfriend is generous and kind to everyone, which I admire, but how can I get him to understand this is too much for me?

Elise

A Elise, a farmer views rain from one perspective and a city dweller from another. Each may be right, but only from their own perspective.

You see your boyfriend's friends as spongers who make work for you, and his mother as a woman who doesn't understand proper limits.

He may think his mother only wants to help. He may see his friends as attentive and caring people who want to spend time with him. From his perspective, they don't want to sightsee because the purpose of the visit is to be with him. In addition, he may appreciate that they incurred an expense to visit.

On a superficial level, your letter is about setting boundaries and negotiating a settlement. But below the surface, there is a more important issue.

He has a generous nature. Though you might force or threaten him into a partial change, in a short time he will revert to his normal way of acting. It is who he is. That may explain, at least in part, why you are with him.

Why do you date someone? To find out who they are and to learn if you can live with who they are. Can you or can't you live with a man who you think is a soft touch to his family and friends? That matters because, if you say "I do" to him, you will also be saying "I do" to his friends and his mother.

You love him...but for his accommodating nature...but for his friends and family...but for the fact you can't live this way. Then again, maybe it is not his friends or his family. Maybe he is not right for you. You have anxiety issues, so it is important to be with someone you mesh with. Those issues don't give you the right to make others change for you. Those issues should make you more mindful of what you need. If you force him to stop acting as he does, his friends and family will blame you. You might get your way and stop resenting him, only to have him start resenting you. When a man wants to cut a woman off from her friends or family, we call him controlling and manipulative. If you want the same, what should we call you?

A farmer views rain from one perspective and a city dweller from another. Each may be right, but only from their own perspective.

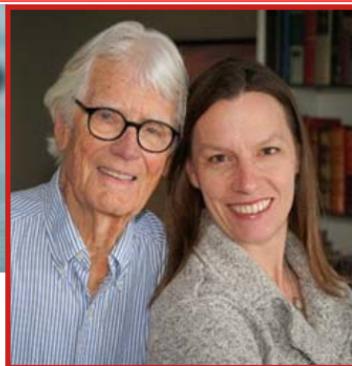
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The Doctor Game COVID MEANS DOUBLE TROUBLE, AND WORSE

W. Gifford-Jones, M.D. and Diana Gifford-Jones

If ever a time to act on your health, this is it. Study after study in leading medical journals reports compounding troubles from COVID-19. What was described as a lung disease early in the pandemic is now better recognized as an attack on health systems – your own body's systems involving multiple organs as well as societal systems of disease surveillance and care delivery. Whether you have been infected or not, chances are high your health is

becoming worse.

New research should raise alarm bells.

In the journal, Nature, Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, chief of research at Veterans Affairs St. Louis Health Care System, reported on deteriorated health of COVID-19 survivors. To his amazement, the disease was not just deadlier for people with underlying conditions like diabetes. Data show that people are seemingly developing metabolic disease as a result of the infection.

How this happens is yet to be understood. Some scientists think SARS-CoV-2 not only damages the lungs, but other organs too. The pancreas which produces insulin needed to convert blood-sugar to energy might be affected by the infection. Another concern is the sedentary lifestyle brought on by the pandemic. Late or missed diagnoses of health issues among people skipping or unable to maintain medical appointments could be a factor.

Obesity and poor lifestyle issues are leading ever more children down the path to avoidable chronic disease. COVID is compounding problems for children who develop Type 2 diabetes. A study of such youth published in Diabetes Care showed a troubling and unexplained increase last year in diabetic ketoacidosis, a dangerous buildup of acid in the blood due to inadequate insulin supply.

Pregnancy is another area of concern. Research published in JAMA Pediatrics involving 18 countries found COVID-19 in pregnancy was associated with consistent and substantial increases in severe maternal morbidity and mortality and neonatal complications when pregnant women with and without COVID-19 diagnosis were compared. This underscores precautions to prevent COVID illness during pregnancy by following public health measures.

But how is COVID making you sick, even if you don't catch the virus?

For one, the pandemic has caused a sharp decline in preventative care and screening, particularly for breast, colon, cervical and lung cancers.

One study in California, conducted by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, found that between March and June of 2020, the rate of cervical cancer screening among 1.5 million women decreased by roughly 80%, compared with the same period in 2019.

Another study at the University of Cincinnati Medical Centre found that in March 2020 alone, more than 800 appointments for lung cancer screening were postponed. Upon resumption of screenings two months later, the percentage of people tested who had lung nodules suspicious for cancer had increased from 8% before the pandemic to 29%.

In some health care systems, a rapid switch to at-home screening tests, such as the fecal immunochemical test (FIT) for colorectal cancer, has kept pace with pre-pandemic testing. But in most places, individuals need to take the initiative to request the test kits and get it done.

Delays in screening, especially among people at risk, can mean missing early diagnosis. Cancers may grow larger and more deadly before they are detected.

Delays in all kinds of surgeries are yet another concern.

Research has only begun to emerge regarding the tsunami of mental health problems that have crept or crashed into the lives of many. An echo pandemic of mental illness will almost certainly follow.

So do not wait for trouble. Prevention is key. Make lifestyle changes to improve your health. Get tested where advisable or do at-home screening. Read past articles at docgiff.com if you need reminders.

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