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Plastic Surgery: Let's keep it clean during the games

**By DR. ALAN MUSKETT
For The Gazette**

Medical terminology is like a foreign language - only worse. When there is a simple way to say something, medical people can find a way to make it sound like ancient Urdu delivered in a shower of spit.

So you have a gall bladder attack? Not so fast. You have acute cholecystitis, perhaps acalculous cholecystitis.

Plastic surgery is great for terminology. Do you have love handles? Nooo. You have flank lipodystrophy.

You had a couple of babies and your breasts deflated like carnival balloons nailed with a dart? You have involutinal hypomastia and are in urgent need of subpectoral dual-plane augmentation.

Honestly, most medicine, surgery in particular, isn't any harder than installing a replacement garbage disposal under the sink, but we wear white coats and use big words and that seems to work at scaring you.

But a line is crossed when the abuse of medical terminology intrudes on the most sacred of rituals, a football playoff game on TV. I am admittedly a bit lowbrow, but a great game, in front of the plasma flat screen, holding a Mickey's Big Mouth and sitting with my best bud 14-year-old son is as near to universal harmonic resonance as it comes

for me.

So then, it strikes. A 50-ish guy with lots of hair on the commercial, looking almost imperceptibly panicked.

A slightly younger, "handsome" woman appearing hopeful but chronically.... disappointed.

Oh, no. Oh, yes.

"Do you suffer from erectile dysfunction?" My son slouches as if trying to bury himself in the sectional. "When the time is right ..." First of all, for a 14-year-old boy, the subject of such ancient humans, especially his PARENTS, engaging in such activities, drug-enhanced or not, is beyond disgusting. (Does Dad need that stuff?). Second, if I deny that I need the drugs, then I confirm that things are working OK, which is more repellent somehow.

Then they go on "... lasting for more than four hours, please contact your doctor." So the teenage boy is thinking "four hours - try four years, dude." And the doctor dad is thinking "please do not ever contact me about anything even vaguely related to that."

And what about the bathtubs next to the ocean? And why two bathtubs? What is the point of taking this drug to, ah, fortify things when you are likely of an age that getting in or out of such a tub is a life-threatening event? And if you both get in the same tub, then what? Hopefully there is a Medic-Alert button next to the hot-water spigot. How much do you think it will cost to keep the paramedics quiet, if you don't drown before they quit convulsing with laughter while planning the extrication? After all that medicine, will they have to use the Jaws of Life?

I remember watching Walter Cronkite while growing up, the evening news, and they had the commercials "for occasional irregularity, use only as directed," and I always wondered what irregularity was, but it wasn't like they showed a picture of an outhouse next to the Tetons or something. I know we are supposedly much more sophisticated now, but when a football game is desecrated, the social fabric develops an irrevocable rent.

I have an idea. As a doctor, I will speak to my patients in words and terms that they can understand. If my patient has a delicate or personal problem, I will discuss it with them in clear, layman terms in absolute confidence, in a manner that communicates that I care about them. In return, they will help support a law banning any discussion of bodily functions below the rib cage during a football game.

Dr. Alan Muskett is a board-certified plastic surgeon at Billings Plastic Surgery. More information is available at www.billingsplasticsurgery.com.

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