

You asked,
we answered —
everything you
wanted to know
about the good life.

ask audrey



beauty

Q I have these small ingrown hairs on my legs that really bother me. The only solution that I've found is to pull them out. Is that really the only way? — Jen S.

Dermatologist Dr. Jessica Wu answers: Ingrown hairs on the legs can be really stubborn, since the skin is thicker and doesn't turn over as quickly as elsewhere on the body. In general, it's best to avoid pulling them out; this will only help temporarily, and as soon as the hairs start to grow, they'll become ingrown again. If you can see the hairs, gently lift the tips and clip them with clean cuticle scissors. This way they don't grow back ingrown. To minimize ingrowns on the legs and elsewhere (bikini, underarms), a scrub or lotion with salicylic acid can help unclog the follicles. I recommend Neutrogena Body Clear Body Scrub, which also has smooth beads to loosen the hairs. You can also try the Clarisonic skincare brush, which helps slough off dead skin to help prevent ingrowns.

Q Makeup artists and beauty magazines always say to match your foundation to your neck or to the inside of your wrist. But whenever I try that, I end up looking like I'm wearing a pasty mask. So then I tried a foundation that matched my face, but then my neck looked unusually pale. Help! — Multihued girl

Makeup artist Rachel Kim answers: If you have a deeper complexion, matching your foundation to your neck will usually leave you looking ashy and pasty. Find a face moisturizer that has an SPF higher than 15 and apply to your face, down to your neck. Gradually it should help keep your face and neck more even.

If your face is a few shades darker than your neck, it's better to match the color to your face and blend down to your neck and chest, especially when you know you'll be taking pictures. Camera flashes always emphasize the color difference between the face and neck. On the other hand, if you're a light makeup wearer, you can match your neck with a tinted moisturizer. While it evens you out, the tinted moisturizer is sheer enough to let the natural shade of your face come through.

health

Q My boyfriend smokes marijuana a little every day after work for about a month, and then stops for, say, three months. He says that marijuana is not addictive and that drinking alcohol is more harmful than pot. My question is, are there any side effects to smoking pot? What about the way he does it, continuously for a while and then stopping cold turkey? I do notice that he gets grumpy for a few days after he's stopped cold turkey. — Second-hand smoker

Psychiatrist Dr. Doonam Kim answers: Marijuana (cannabis) has been used as a medicinal herb for thousands of years. Although generally illegal in the United States, marijuana is prescribed to treat nausea and pain from cancer, multiple sclerosis (MS), AIDS and glaucoma. It is probably the most commonly used illicit drug in the U.S. and around the world. Smoking marijuana leads to red eyes, a mildly faster heart rate, euphoric feelings, and changes in coordination, memory, perception and attention. Regular, daily users can develop a physical tolerance to marijuana over

time, meaning they might need higher or stronger amounts to get the same effect. A psychological dependence to marijuana can develop, while the evidence for physical dependence is not strong. However, because tolerance can develop, abruptly stopping regular, higher doses of marijuana can lead to withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, restlessness, insomnia, nausea/decreased appetite, sadness and anxiety. Usually, the withdrawal symptoms start 24 hours after last use, peak in about three days, and decrease after two weeks. The most serious possible danger from smoking marijuana is the risk for chronic respiratory disease and lung cancer. Reports have indicated an association between long-term marijuana use and decreased brain volume, chromosomal damage, birth defects, altered testosterone levels and irregular menstrual cycles, but are indeterminate. Another concern associated with long-term marijuana use is the development of amotivational syndrome, when people are described as careless, apathetic and poorly motivated. There is some debate on whether the syndrome is related to the amount of marijuana used or just a character trait of a certain group of people. In the end, your boyfriend's pattern of marijuana use does not seem to put him at any immediate psychological or physical risk. Regarding his off again/on again use, a question that needs to be asked is how much of his pot use is recreational versus how much might be some form of self-medication. Many who suffer from things like depression, anxiety or stress frequently turn to drugs and/or alcohol. They also develop a pattern of use that might coincide with symptoms they experience. If in doubt, he might think about consulting a psychiatrist.

relationships

Is it pointless dating a man who doesn't see marriage (with anyone) or kids in his future, when you do? Is it stupid hoping maybe you could be the "special" one to change his mind? — Jana

Psychotherapist Meme Rhee

answers: To your date's credit, he communicates his position to be fair to you. And his communication could be many things: don't get too attached, I'm incapable of commitment, or you're not the one. Here are some factors you might consider before investing more time and energy into the relationship.

1. His age and your age. I've seen many men declare not seeing marriage and children in their future only to change their minds later. In my experience, the ratio has been about 50-50. Change often unfolds as a process and therefore requires time. If he's in his 40s, he is probably more certain than if he's in his 20s. If you're in your 20s, you have a lot more time than if you're in your mid- to late 30s to wait and see.

2. His profession. If he places priority in a profession that demands a commitment with little room for domestic life, he's being realistic about his needs and ability to pledge himself. Also, being a husband and father isn't just a time commitment, but a financial one. Supporting a lifestyle not just for himself but also a family for at least the next 18 years can be a daunting prospect.

3. His and your history. While each person responds uniquely to his own family history, one can better understand the choices a person makes by examining the perspective he's adopted. For example, if he experienced important relationships (like mom and dad) as disappointments or failures, then he may have little faith in the possibility of achieving his ideal. At the same time, does his rejection of commitment drive your fantasy to "fix" him? Your attraction to this is worth exploring. Do you repeat a pattern of chasing the unavailable person? And if so, is this your own unspoken rejection of commitment and intimacy?

4. His and your own relationship history. If you notice that relationships for either of you don't last beyond six months to a year, perhaps one or both of you have some commitment issues that you most likely would not be able to change.

5. His honesty. Is it possible that he doesn't see *you* as someone to marry, but is being delicate/indirect in expressing this? If you suspect so, you might investigate why: religion, ethnicity, education? I have certainly heard of many individuals who were told their partner didn't believe in marriage who then went out and promptly married the next person who came along.

If you decide to stay, I encourage you to let go of your hope that he'll change, and simply embrace the connection you share with him. If you let go, perhaps it is emblematic of your own commitment to that authentic (and uncompromising?) part of yourself that wants nothing less than marriage and family. If you're 22, you have the time and luxury to figure it out. If you're 34, you know better. p

Our

Jessica Wu is a Harvard-educated, board-certified dermatologist with her own line of skincare products, Dr. Jessica Wu Cosmeceuticals, which incorporate the most advanced skincare ingredients and Asian botanical extracts. You can get Jessica Wu's fabulous skincare line at www.drjessicawu.com.



Inspired by her own single-lidded eyes, **Rachel Kim**, armed with degrees in fine arts and cosmetic merchandise marketing, works frequently with M.A.C. and has done makeup on fashion shows, music videos, television and magazines. Check her out at www.perpetualartistry.com.



Doonam Kim, M.D., is a clinical assistant professor of psychiatry at the New York University School of Medicine. He treats patients in his private practice in midtown Manhattan in New York City. To read more about Dr. Kim, refer to his website www.doonamkim.com.



Psychotherapist **Meme Rhee** practices in Southern California at the Akasha Center for Integrative Medicine, and the Bellavita Eating Disorders Clinic. Meme provides individual and corporate counseling, as well as cross-cultural and leadership training.



CAUGHT IN A DILEMMA? EMAIL YOUR TOUGH QUESTIONS TO EDITOR@AUDREYMAGAZINE.COM, SUBJECT LINE "ASK AUDREY."