



ooh matron!

Your embarrassing questions

I'm 23 and I've never touched my private area. I'm scared and don't know what to do. I hear masturbation is very satisfying, and I'd like to try it. Can you give me tips to help me get started?
Georgina, 4

Despite all the buzz about

masturbation, many women don't do it.

I suggest you start by exploring your genitals with your fingers and a handheld mirror. Find out what's there!

Once you do that, you'll be able to show a partner how you like to be touched and build that into your lovemaking.

Collapsed!

No wonder I couldn't get my breath



Justine Laymond, 33, from Chelmsford

Ouchi! I groaned. My chest really hurt. 'Maybe my lung's collapsed again,' I said to a friend at the health club we worked at.

When I was 21, my right lung had collapsed, but I'd had surgery to stop it happening again.

I'd had chest pains in the past, but was told that it was nerve endings healing. This was worse.

My mum, Jo, 60, and dad Barry, 65, drove me to Chase Farm Hospital.

I could barely breathe when we got there.

They took x-rays and found my other lung had collapsed.

They did tests, and found I had lymphangioliomyomatosis, which causes an overgrowth of a cell in the airways which can lead to collapsed lungs.

I'd need a double lung transplant within three to six months, or I could die. I'd have to wait for the lungs... but,



Fighting for life in hospital



Breathing easy!

I gave up work, but am now an artist and I do still go the health club occasionally. I was so lucky to get a second chance...

in the meantime, my lungs had to be inflated.

Six months passed in the hospital, but by January 2006, my health got worse...

My lung collapsed three times within a week. I had to say my goodbyes to my family...

In February, I had an emergency operation – but it didn't work and I was put on a life-support machine. It was the only thing keeping me alive.

Two more months went by and I was determined to survive for the transplant.

On 9 July this year, I had the transplant and the operation went well. It's incredible to be able to breathe freely again. Before, I could only gasp for air.

I have to take 40 tablets a day for the rest of my life, but it's worth it. I do still go the health club occasionally. I was so lucky to get a second chance...

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doc

side manner

Bleedin' irritated!

My vagina and bottom are so itchy and sore that sometimes I end up rubbing them so much that I bleed!

I'm too embarrassed to see my doctor, what do you suggest?

Sheila, 46

Stop rubbing them for a start! It could be simply sensitive skin or a thrush infection. Stop using soap, bubble bath or shower gel, dry carefully after washing,

• Always consult your pharmacist or GP before taking any over-the-counter or prescription remedies, and read the packet carefully.

use wet wipes instead of loo paper, and don't apply talc or deodorant. Also, wear loose, cotton undies, and buy an over-the-counter thrush cream. Threadworms can cause mystery itching, especially if you have contact with children – you can get treatment for this from your chemist's. If this doesn't work – see your doctor!

In the dark

Isuffer terribly from migraines, especially if I eat cheese or chocolate, or drink coffee or red wine.

Painkillers help, but I'm fed up with spending days in my room with the curtains drawn!

Lynne, 51

You've spotted the triggers but I'm sorry, the only answer is to cut them out. So no more

cheese-and-wine parties for you I'm afraid!

Painkillers can help, but migraine pills from your chemist's might work better to stop a headache in its tracks.

If you have migraines every month or two, your GP might suggest taking something daily to prevent attacks. Prevention is better than cure after all!

Still waiting...

We've been trying for another baby for over 18 months. We've three children – the youngest is 2 – and I didn't have any problem with them...

Rachael, 33

• Write to Dr Martin Edwards at Chat, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. Sorry, he can't reply personally.

OT SEXSPOT

Lord of the rings...

I love my boyfriend but his penis is very small. We've seen adverts for rings to widen his penis. Do they work?

Janey, 4

Penis rings that fit around the base of his penis and keep it filled with blood can help maintain an erection but won't make him much bigger. Maybe you could try a penis enhancer, a sleeve that slips over his member to widen it for your pleasure, while leaving the sensitive tip exposed for him!