

THE BEST MEDICINE

Ethnic Slips

Medical terminology can be difficult to handle, even for patients fluent in English, but it is next to impossible for those for whom English is a second language. Having a large ethnic practice, I've noticed quite a few of my patients employ terms which, when uttered, often lighten up even the most tedious of days. What makes these expressions that much more funny is the fact that, for professional reasons, I'm forced to laugh on the inside. For example, nothing gets rid of those stubborn headaches like "tylenol extra-strange." If all patients switched from "homo to skinny milk," they would surely loose weight. Recently, a patient presented with a primary complaint of a "problem with his peanuts" and I was forced to use vague, open-ended questions to proceed.

Finally, I've learned to never assume patients have an understanding of even rudimentary anatomy. On one occasion, I had to use a great deal of delicacy to convince a male patient that he didn't need to be screened for ovarian cancer, even though it was in his family. The longer I've been in practice, the more I realize that the art of healing begins with the art of education. As a teacher, I can honestly say I've had some memorable students so far. ☒

This item was sent in by
Dr. L. Grbac, Mississauga Ontario.



"No one understands me."

Have you ever been in a funny medical-related situation that you'd like to share with your peers? Send us your 150- to 200-word contribution so we can share your laughs. Published authors will receive a specialty mug from The Canadian Journal of Diagnosis.