

# Do not ignore sports injuries



## YOUR HEALTH

DR GITA MATHAI

**Q** I was playing badminton and I slipped and fell. Now my knee is swollen and painful.

If the pain and swelling persist for more than 2-3 days despite applying ice and taking painkillers, consult an orthopaedic doctor. Sports like badminton, tennis and basketball are known for causing pivot injuries, during which internal structures of the knee, such as ligaments and the meniscus, can be damaged. An MRI scan can help diagnose these injuries and in some cases, surgical repair may be required to prevent long-term pain and arthritis.



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### Low sodium

**Q** I feel tired and weak all the time. I underwent several blood and urine tests, and the only abnormal finding was a low sodium level. I am 56 years old and have hypertension.

Low sodium can cause weakness and giddiness. Sometimes, blood pressure medications, especially diuretics, can lead to low sodium levels. It is also important to rule out conditions such as hypothyroidism, adrenal insufficiency as well as liver and kidney disease. You could try drinking a glass of slightly salted buttermilk or lime juice daily.

### Sugar truths

**Q** I am diabetic and avoid sugar. My friend told me that I can use honey

or brown sugar to sweeten my tea and coffee. Can I use artificial sweeteners instead?

It may be tempting to add honey or other forms of sugar to your food and drink but they will still raise your blood sugar quickly. There is not much difference between a teaspoon of white and brown sugar. Artificial sweeteners also have side effects. They can quickly alter the composition of gut flora, leading to bloating and diarrhoea.

### Behavioural problem

**Q** My brother is now 19 years of age but behaves like a 3-year-old. He has started becoming physically abusive towards my mother. Do you think counselling will help?

Your brother may not respond well to counselling as his cognitive development is not appropriate for his age. He might benefit from medica-

tion to help manage his aggression. A psychiatrist would be best placed to assess him and provide guidance on both behavioural management and other appropriate medical treatment.

### Safe chicken

**Q** There is a bird flu scare locally. Is it safe to eat chicken and eggs?

It is safe provided you follow certain precautions. Buy chicken and eggs from reputable sources. Cook them thoroughly; avoid eating half-boiled eggs or undercooked chicken. The cooked chicken should not be pink. Use separate cutting boards and knives for raw meat and other foods. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw poultry.

The writer has a family practice at Vellore and is the author of *Staying Healthy in Modern India*. If you have any questions on health issues please write to [yourhealthgm@yahoo.co.in](mailto:yourhealthgm@yahoo.co.in)