

Trailside Medical Advisor, A To H

Abdominal Pains

Abdominal pains come in two types: One, from the inside out, caused by something you ate. Two, from the outside in, caused by something you rammed into your gut.

Outside in: The most common impaling object is the handlebar; no matter how a motorcycle falls, one of these always sticks up and landing on it is a foregone conclusion. Outside-in injuries are harmless unless you hear definite "sloshing" when you walk. Should this occur, dig the Blue Cross card from where it's buried in your wallet and stash it in with the paper money; that way, the first curious person to discover you will be sure to find it.

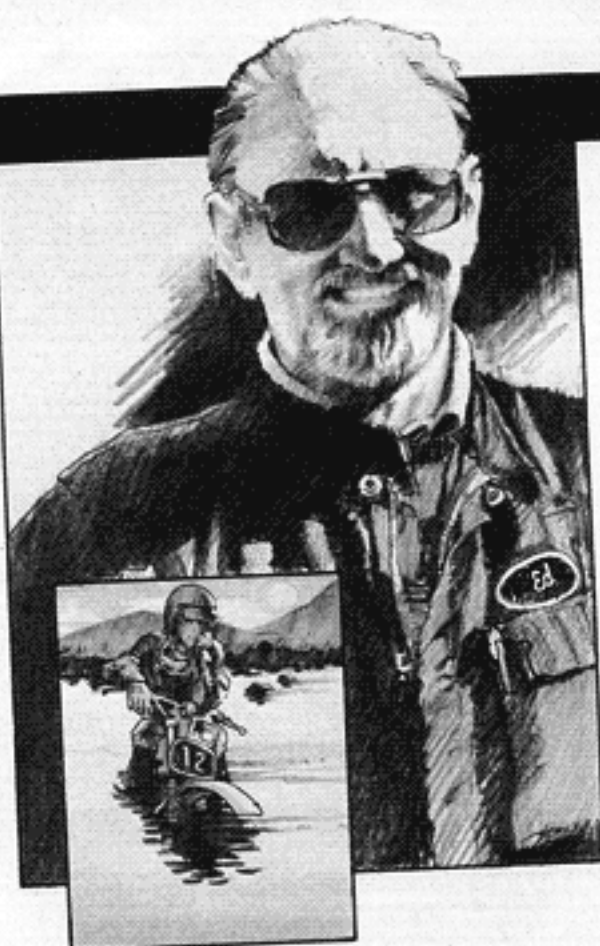
Inside out: This type of abdominal pain has many causes: eating donuts that can soak an oil ring through six pages of the Philadelphia *Sunday Inquirer* magazine section; worrying about a chain that's almost dragging on the ground because the adjusters "bottomed" 166 miles ago; eating a fried-egg sandwich that was in the wrong place when the gas can tipped over.

Bites

Dog: Do not show fear. (I read this somewhere; they scare me witless.) Be very careful riding past hand-lettered signs reading, "DANGER, DOGGS BITTE REEL GUD"; these beasts may have missed some of their obedience training classes. The old saying "a barking dog never bites" might not necessarily be true. "A dog's teeth are cleaner than a human's" might also prove false—when was the last time you saw a human gnawing on a six-week-old possum carcass?

Snake: Eastern Diamondback—speed is essential. Notify the Environmental Protection Agency immediately; this rattler is on the "endangered" list and must be inoculated with an anti-skin serum so it doesn't get a headache and refuse to breed. (Note: this applies to female snakes only. To identify sex send for EPA booklet 1801A—THE SNAKE WHICH HAS FATALLY BITTEN YOU IS. . . . Allow four to six weeks for delivery; include address of next-of-kin.)

Insects: All insects think of off-road riders as a food service that delivers itself. In South Jersey the greenhead flies think the East Coast Enduro Association is a catering service. Insects which have crawled under a helmet and gone into an ear cannot be killed by slamming your head against a tree. See also: *Concussion*



Blackheads

Cause: Ground-in dirt, especially disgusting where a rider's goggles contact his face.

Treatment: A patient, understanding lady with reasonably long fingernails and some experience weeding. Heavier ladies are equipped with comfortable face-rests, but if the lady is nearsighted, there is danger of asphyxiation.

This is said to be a nice way to die.

Chapped Lips

A genuine epidemic and the reason off-road riders always look dour—if they smile, their lips split open.

Treatment: Chapstick or Vaseline. Riders also report excellent results from using the grease that comes in the tiny blister-pac included with a new set of ignition points.

Concussion

First degree: Bouncing off a low branch at 10 miles an hour.

Second degree: Bouncing off a low branch at 20 miles an hour and remaining on the motorcycle.

Third degree: Bouncing off a low branch at 20 miles an hour, flipping off the back of the motorcycle and landing on your head on a tree root.

Fourth degree: You can't remember how you hit your head; you can remember the town you live in but not the street address.

Fifth degree: You can remember your street address but not the town.

Sixth degree: You can't remember where you've parked the van.

Seventh degree: You can remember where you've parked the van but have forgotten how to drive.

Depression

Depression is the normal state of mind for off-road riders; it's usually caused by weather conditions. If it's too dry, the trails are covered with

dust; too wet, the trails are covered with mud. When conditions are perfect the trails are covered with *other* off-road riders always traveling wide-open in the opposite direction. Meeting them on a 36-inch-wide trail can be very depressing—and hard on collarbones.

Treatment: Valium. One Valium will slow your reflexes and you'll overshoot turns. Two Valiums will slow your speed so much you'll undershoot turns. Three Valiums and you'll sit in the open back of the van, lean against the still-unloaded motorcycle and imagine you're having a wonderful time.

Earache

Causes: Parking too close to Mel Downs' motor home and listening to his ported and relieved generator hammering when his batteries get low; standing near "Mr. Wonderful" as he protests the check he "burned" for two minutes; falling asleep in a van with your ear on the door lock button; listening to Ed Baker tell about his latest SuperCrash, which would have killed a normal person—twice.

Treatment: Wear your helmet at all times, and if you see Baker coming shove your gloves up over your ears.

Flatulence

Causes: Trying to digest day-old coffee while driving an overloaded van (whose center of gravity is level with your eyebrows) on a tar road that hasn't been repaired since the forest fire and in patchy fog so thick you can *feel* when it hits you; worrying whether your wife really *will* give everything in the garage to the junkman if you're not home by dark; eating old apples that are a sort of tan on the inside.

Gas Pains

Causes: when you really *want* to eat and run, but the motorcycle won't start; when you've drawn Number 2A, and 62 pit crew guys and hangers-on are in front of you in the ham and egg line; when you've flown 1200 miles to the Alligator, and five minutes from your start time the guys trucking your Yamaha down from New Jersey still haven't arrived; when you've had your ham and eggs, really need to go, and the same 62 guys and are now in front of you at the Porta-Potty line.

See also: *Flatulence*

Herpes

Can be transmitted by motorcycle seats, but only if you're doing something on the seat that requires a great deal of skill, exceptional concentration, and warm weather.

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