

'A doctor in America took out his own appendix just to prove his anaesthetic worked. Good job the guy wasn't selling guns — he might have ended up shooting himself in the head just to prove that his bullets worked'

Ask Dr Ozzy

+ Dear Dr Ozzy My 25-year-old daughter lives alone in London and has started going on internet dates. Is this safe? How can I get her to meet a man the old-fashioned way — ie, offline?
Max, Hull

The internet makes me glad I've got attention deficit disorder, because otherwise I'd be as glued to the screen as everyone else, getting up to no good. But times have changed, and I've heard a lot of stories about people meeting the love of their life online — so it can't be all bad. Besides, what's worse: arranging dates on the computer, or getting picked up in bars? The only thing I'd say to your daughter is: "A guy can tell you anything he wants to online, so don't believe everything you read. Plus, most guys want a bonk, not a wife." Bearing that in mind, I hope she finds the right bloke.

+ What's the best cure for seasonal affective disorder? I get incredibly depressed every year before the clocks go forward, but I can't afford to move to Florida.
Felicity, Doncaster

All you need is a bit of heat and light; by that I don't mean set your house on fire. Try a sunlight simulator if you can't afford a plane ticket.

+ Why are people so worried about the mercury in tuna fish? I read the other day that Abraham Lincoln used to take mercury-laced pills to treat his constipation, and he was in good enough health to lead America (until he was shot, of course).
Percy, Cardiff

The only time I'd get worried about the mercury in tuna fish is if I ate a whole one. Otherwise, I can't see how a bit of sushi every now and then is a problem. Mind you, a friend of my daughter's got mercury poisoning and it was heavy-duty,



man: she had memory loss, slurred speech, loss of co-ordination, mood swings. As for Abe Lincoln, it's never a good idea to say, "Oh, so-and-so survived putting leeches on his eyeballs, so it must be okay." I mean, they used to add heroin to cough mixture. If they did that today, I'd be off sick with a cold 365 days a year.

+ Is it really true that a Russian surgeon stationed in the Antarctic removed his own appendix, spent only a fortnight recovering, then carried on with his work? Could anyone perform a self-appendectomy if there were no other help available?
Gillian, Spain

I got someone to look this up for me, and as mind-blowing as it

sounds, it's absolutely true. It ain't the only case, either. Another doctor, in America, took out his own appendix just to prove his anaesthetic worked (it's a good job he wasn't selling guns for a living — he might have ended up shooting himself in the head to prove his bullets worked). Just 'cos a few nutters have managed to slice themselves open doesn't mean anyone else should try it. Unless you have a set of mirrors handy, sharp knives, a bag of hardcore antibiotics, and balls the size of Mount Rushmore, you'd be better off using your energy to find medical attention before you start digging around your stomach with a Swiss Army Knife. I mean, could you honestly say you'd know what an appendix looked like? Knowing me, I'd end up cutting out a lung instead.

+ My wife wants to give our baby a dummy. I'm putting up a fight, because I think it'll be an impossible habit to break.

David, Cornwall

If you're looking for moral support, David, you've come to the wrong guy. I once sent a private jet halfway across America to go and get "Baby" — my son Jack's comfort blanket — after we left it in a hotel room. That blanket pretty much ended up with its own private security detail; we were so scared of losing it. We've still got it today. Meanwhile, my daughter Kelly wasn't satisfied with one dummy; she had to have two. Breaking the habit wasn't difficult at all: one day, she just got bored with it, as kids do. Then it was straight on to the next big, exciting thing: her thumb ■
Ozzy was talking to Chris Ayres

Do you have a question for Dr Ozzy? Email him at askdrozzy@sunday-times.co.uk

Warning: Ozzy Osbourne is not a qualified medical professional. Caution is advised

SURGERY NOTICEBOARD

Thanks to everyone who wrote in with ideas about how to avoid using germ-covered door handles in public loos after you've washed and dried your hands. James in Aberdeen says the solution is "mind-numbingly obvious: automatic doors. They should be law". (I couldn't agree more.) Mike in Glasgow says door handles aren't even necessary: "You just need an L-shaped entrance, so passing perverts can't peek." Marion from Aberystwyth says "disposable gloves could be provided in vending machines". Keep the emails coming. Together, we'll beat the germs.