

When Your Pants Are Too Tight

It's that time again—when you, against your better judgment, go to reach for that pair of jeans in the closet. You're in a hurry and don't have time to be picky. The last time you tried this stunt, they were way too small. Hopelessly too small. "But maybe this time will be different," you think. Maybe the last time was a fluke. Maybe you've lost a little weight since then. Maybe Martians landed in your closet and . . . well, the possibilities are endless.

A tiny little voice pleads in your ear: "Don't do it! Don't do it!" But it's too late. Your big toe has already gone past the point of no return. Then it's all thighs, butt, and gut from then on, spilling, rolling, flopping out. The sheer horror of it all—those pesky Martians can't be trusted.

When I was growing up, having a little extra "meat on your bones" was a sign that you were blessed to have enough to eat. "Think about all those starving children all around the world," I was told as my plate was piled high. Thank the Lord for plenty. But in our current culture of carbohydrate-loaded, super-sized, fried overabundance and sedentary, overstressed overwork, we have a *big* problem. Literally. And no, we doctors are not immune. Many physicians are overweight. So the bulk of us are in the same boat. (The cool thing about doctors is that we're experts in giving really good advice that most of us don't follow and coming across as completely sincere. Neat, huh?) Some of our healthier medical colleagues run marathons and drink thirty-eight glasses of water a day, but the rest of us bums shun them.

Keeping Your Rear End Off the Evening News

When it comes to weight, here is the most important piece of advice I can think of: absolutely, positively, under no circumstances let your guard down and allow the local news station to video your rear end for their latest news report on obesity. That has to be one of the worst situations ever! And don't they prey on the most unprepared people? The ones who just happen to be caught out of the house in bright purple spandex pants? And yes, I realize that some of you insensitive readers do not feel that the words "just happen" and "spandex" go together. But it's been known to happen to many well-intentioned people.

I hope they give those poor people lots and lots of money. How would you feel if you were sitting down in front of the TV with a hamburger and fries and then, as you were savoring the first delicious, greasy bite, you saw your backside stretching all the way across your TV screen? Inevitably, those kinds of shots linger, because they have to get a prolonged shot of you walking down the street so that all the lumps of fat on your butt are jumping around at the same time.

That's one of the few things I remember from getting a chemistry degree: that oscillating Jell-O-like activity is termed "Brownian Motion." But even this special knowledge wouldn't comfort you in that moment of crisis. What would you do? Go into hiding? (I would, because I'd be certain that the whole world would recognize that particular rear end as mine.) Refuse to leave the house forever? Initiate legal action? That's more like it. I mean, if you can sue someone for libel, just think of the consequences for rear-end defamation! The more critical issue is whether or not you'd finish your burger. So watch your backside. Don't become a victim.