



STDs, crickets and deodorant **OH MY!**

Some questions actually are stupid,
but we answer 'em, anyway

Q: Can you determine the outside temperature by counting the chirps of crickets?

Surprisingly, yes, you can. "The chirping crickets you hear are males calling to females. Because cricket body temperature is the same as the surrounding temperature, the calling rate goes up and down with temperature," says Gary Brewer, head of the entomology department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The calculations to determine the temperature via crickets vary, but the standard seems to be adding 50 to the number of chirps you hear in 15 seconds. The formula will change somewhat depending on the species of cricket you are listening to, but since there are about 900 species of crickets, we suggest just sticking with the above. You're probably screwed if you need a cricket to tell you it's cold.

Q: Is it possible to get a sexually transmitted disease from a toilet seat?

Relax, because the answer is a resounding no. According to Mayo Clinic infectious disease specialist James Steckelberg, M.D., sexually transmitted diseases are transmitted, well... sexually. It generally takes skin-to-skin contact or actual exchange of fluids to pass a disease from one person to another. "The microorganisms – bacteria and viruses – that cause STDs such as genital herpes tend to be sensitive to their surroundings and can't survive outside the human body on a surface like a toilet seat for very long," writes Steckelberg on *mayoclinic.com*.

But this is no excuse to go and plunk your rear down willy-nilly on questionable public toilets around the globe. There is one type of STD that could potentially make it from a dirty toilet seat to your personal parts, and that is pubic lice, a.k.a. crabs. If a commode looks like there is even a slight possibility that it might be housing someone's crabs, then DON'T SIT ON IT.



Q: Does using deodorant cause you to become dependent on it, making you sweat and smell more when you don't use it?

As much as it seemed that Smelly Stanley from gym class had a body that was lost without deodorant, your body shouldn't react differently after giving up on deodorant, says Dr. Sangeeta Marwaha, a dermatologist in Northern California. "They are like perfumes and improve odor," Marwaha says, so when you stop using it, you may think your natural musk is worse than before. But it's not – you've always smelled.

Q: Is there really a chemical compound you can add to swimming pools that turns red when someone urinates?

We've all heard about the time your friend's little brother peed in the pool and the surrounding water sold him out by magically turning red. Yeah, that friend was probably a total liar. Julie Dunlap, manager of California-based Guiton's Pool Center, says she's never seen such a product in her 18 years working in the industry. "It's one of those things that parents threaten the kids with, but don't follow through on because it doesn't exist," she says. Customers do, however, ask her about it all the time. So if you really gotta go at the next pool party, let it flow – but don't say we said so.

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