

# If Your Body Could Talk...

Actually, it can. And this is what it wants you to know: That rash or those funny bumps can be clues to health problems you may not realize you have. Here's what your body just might be trying to tell you. *By Jennifer Abbasi*

*"your thyroid needs a tune-up."*

It's normal for eyebrows to thin as you age. But if it's just the outer third getting sparse, you may have an underactive thyroid. Thyroid meds should get your levels (and brows) back to normal.

*"check your cholesterol, stat."*

Got flat, bright-yellow patches on your eyelids? They're often a sign of high total cholesterol or low levels of HDL ("good") cholesterol. These patches are harmless—but unattractive. A dermatologist can remove them, but since they may come back if you don't keep your cholesterol in line, help fend them off with a heart-healthy diet and exercise; cholesterol meds can also do the trick.

*"no more gluten, please."*

So, there's this itchy, blistering rash on your elbows, shoulders, knees, and butt. Don't just cover it up with clothing—it could be dermatitis herpetiformis, a sign of celiac disease. If a skin biopsy confirms it, your dermatologist will likely treat the rash with an antibiotic and advise you to go on a gluten-free diet.

*"leave your cuticles alone!"*

When your nails grow in with horizontal ridges, it may be a sign of a yeast infection there. This can happen when the cuticle's destroyed—say, by a rough manicure/pedicure. Your dermatologist may suggest using an antiseptic like Listerine (yes, the mouthwash!) under the cuticle, or an oral antifungal med for bad cases.

*"slow down!"*

Peeing pink? Unless you've been eating beets, there's probably blood in your urine. You could have a urinary tract infection—or an overly hard-core workout: Strenuous exercisers, like marathon runners, can see red from the trauma all that work inflicts on their kidneys. Visit your doctor to rule out more serious possibilities, such as kidney stones. If exercise is the problem, you may need to switch to a gentler regimen.

*"get to the gyno."*

If your period's lasting longer than a week, and that's unusual for you, possible culprits include fibroids or polyps (usually benign growths of the uterine lining), polycystic ovary syndrome, or perimenopause. Your doctor may prescribe a hormonal treatment, like the Pill; a new, non-hormonal drug called Lysteda could also help.

**OUR SOURCES:** Michele Curtis, MD, professor of OB/GYN at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston; Tomas Griebing, MD, professor of urology at the University of Kansas; Joseph Jorizzo, MD, professor of dermatology at Wake Forest School of Medicine