



The Woman Who Swallowed a Toothbrush: And Other Weird Medical Case Histories

Rob Myers

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Why did the woman swallow the toothbrush? Was it an accident? Why was the brush end not facing down? Join Dr. Myers in his quest for unusual case studies as he unravels medical mysteries.

The Woman Who Swallowed a Toothbrush: And Other Weird Medical Case Histories Details

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Amber says

My friend told me I need to read this book years ago and I finally got to take it off of my "To Read" list!!

Totally fun, quick and brainless book.

It's amazing what situations people get themselves into! I think the most shocking story for me was the suicide by street sign. I don't think I would ever think to do that if I wanted to die. Crazy.

Anyways, I'll recommend this book to anyone with a strong stomach. :)

Steven says

Oh, this book is a hoot! It's filled with one- and two-page stories about people with the strangest of ailments--most of them self-inflicted. Reading the book was a romp through a lifetime of bizarre ER visits, one after another. For example, the woman who swallowed a toothbrush--and got it lodged in her throat--claimed to have been brushing her teeth at the time. However, the instrument was in there backwards. Doctors persuaded her to admit she had been trying to induce vomiting and to accept treatment for an eating disorder. Many of the other stories are much, MUCH stranger. Caution--a number of them involve bizarre sexual fetishes, and the content is not at all appropriate for young minds (some of whom might enjoy this the most!).

Kathryn says

I picked this book up yesterday (I think it belongs to my daughter), and found it a very quick read, as I read it in one sitting. I found it a very entertaining book, though perhaps not for the faint of heart or stomach.

The author collected these reported true stories of medical case oddities as a doctor in Ontario. These are cases of strange illnesses, accidental (or purposeful) heavy metal poisonings, and items that are just unbelievable. The 51 stories are written in a non-medical style, explaining possibly arcane terminology and procedures for the general public.

These medical cases are indeed bizarre; several were life-threatening, or killed the patient involved, so one feels somewhat guilty for being amused by the cases. But this is wonderful reading for the smallest room in one's house.

Rocio Reed says

A quick read, very interesting and somewhat cringe worthy.

Caroline says

This book was pretty good. I liked how all of the medical cases had a slight sense of humor in them! I also liked how blunt the book was. They were very descriptive about everything. Probably one of the things I liked most about this book, however, was how I recognized one of the story's from having watching it on 1000 Ways to Die. It was exaggerated greatly on the show compared to how it actually happened. The short stories definitely kept the book interesting.

Jessica says

A fast, entertaining, interesting read. Definitely not for the faint of heart or anyone who likes to read while eating dinner.

Jennifer Wardrip says

This was a fascinating book that I read in one day!

It covers 51 unusual (and sometimes gross!) medical conditions that have actually been documented. There is the woman who swallowed a toothbrush like the title suggests (she accidentally swallowed it while using it to force herself to vomit) to the man who had a swollen and distended abdomen, and the scars from trying to remove what was in it (after his death, the autopsy showed he had swallowed a number of metal objects).

I recommend reading this book alongside Dennis DiClaudio's THE HYPOCHONDRIAC'S POCKET GUIDE TO HORRIBLE DISEASES YOU PROBABLY ALREADY HAVE, which is just as fascinating -- and tongue-in-cheek hilarious!!

Charles says

A series of case studies about bizarre medical events, including the title story about a woman who was using a toothbrush to induce vomiting and swallowed it in the process. There are a lot of weird cases in the book, some resulting in deaths but most of which people lived through. Each case is only a few pages long. The writing is very simple and fact based. No poetry in it as you might find in a medical book by someone like Oliver Sacks, but interesting nevertheless.

Rachel says

I'm about 1/3 done and so far the most disturbing story has been that a hospital was infested with mice and when the mice died, the hospital then became infested with flies. Said flies ended up laying eggs in an ICU patient's nose and turned into maggots. ;LDKGNIGHS !!!

I wish the author had included the year in which these cases happened. I work at a large hospital in the midwest and we have many, MANY government and private organizations sneakily and not-so-sneakily inspect us often. We get comments about dust under machines that literally never move... I can only imagine what they would have said about dead mouse carcasses lying around long enough to get infested with flies...

Also - it is pretty poorly written - and some of the little quips the write tosses in are pretty unnecessary. It kind of reminds me of the show *1000 Ways to Die* when they just keep relating stuff back to sex... could be a little annoying.

Amanda says

Very well-written, this is a medical book that pleases both those with a medical background and the layperson. There is just enough jargon that you know the author knows his stuff, but not so much that the average person can't follow along (although watching a few episodes of *House* or *Grey's Anatomy* wouldn't hurt). The stories are very short, just a few pages apiece, and succinct enough that I can go through several in one sitting. I didn't like putting the book down at all! I would read more books like this for sure.

Abby Reyes says

Incredible, and sometimes entertaining, stories of our bodies' abuses and potential.

Nicole says

Don't EVER read this after reading *Mary Roach*, 13 pages in and I already want to put it down. The author treats the reader like an idiot (I know what a sternum is, tyvm) and, I agree, the author is flippant and rude towards the patients and doctors. It lacks the subtle funny and some details i would enjoy a a medical buff. Also, once you've read "Gulp", this material is hardly shocking. A nice fast read but for gods sake don't buy the thing.

Barbara ★ says

I expected some really wild and crazy emergency room encounters but only strange anomalies prevailed. Though there are a few totally bizarre incidents such as...

 the boy whose intestines were sucked out his rectum by the suction hole in the bottom of a swimming pool; or the man who ruptured his rectum after having sex with his prize boar; or the guy who committed suicide by leaning his body out the car window and being cut in half by the speed limit sign (my personal favorite...so creative!)

It must be interesting to work in the emergency room though I'm sure events of these nature aren't every day

occurrences. And I do think the creators of Grey's Anatomy have read this book as it definitely sounds like something they've come up with in the past.

Karen says

Veering towards 2 stars. The book is decidedly outdated in attitudes (it was written in 2003, when trans people and crossdressers were still novel). I believe Myers was going for a brisk and clinical tone in many of his stories (many were about 4 pages), but some of the stories are so abrupt that they feel insensitive and exploitative instead. This might also be a function of the time the book was written.

There are a few longer stories towards the end which are well executed, although I got a bit of whiplash from the change in completeness and detail from story to story. The medical mysteries were indeed interesting though.

Elizabeth Sullivan says

51 Very short, often amusing, sometimes disturbing medical stories. Worth reading if you like weird medical cases, and aren't too squeamish.

Sarah says

this was okay. the thing that bothered me the most was the rather flippant and disrespectful manner in which many of the cases were written. it stood out a lot.

and some of the stuff wasn't even that odd. maybe it was 10 years ago, or would be to someone who hasn't watched a lot of ER or doesn't work with medical books. but priapism? not really an oddity.

(some of the cases were interesting though, and worth re-relating to a friend)

Julianne says

Okay, guys (you know who you are), don't make fun of me, but I finished this one in 1 day. The chapters are each 3 pages long and have enough fluff (for the non-medical professional) that I was able to skim through that it really only took a few hours. Plus, after coming home and frantically cleaning my house in preparation for my in-laws, I deserved a bit of time to sit and concentrate on a bit of light reading.

I recommend this to the people who like the cool medical stories on ER and Grey's Anatomy, and always wondered "Yeah, but does that really ever happen? Seriously?!" Oh, and it's written for both healthcare professionals and lay people, so don't worry if you don't know the terminology--you'll still get it.

Also, keep in mind these *type* of stories make up 0.1% of medicine--most people lead mundane, normally unhealthy existences.

Christine Kayser says

This collection of short stories was a super fast read. It was like a bunch of episodes of ER condensed into a book, but based on true medical cases. It was fascinating, but could be super gross at times. The only thing that really bugged me is that he gives all the patients fictional names and they're sometimes offensively stereotypical - a Russian patient named Svetlana, a farmer named Jed, that kind of thing. Every once in a while there was also a CSI Miami-level lame punchline that fell flat. Still worth it for whatever bargain bin I pulled it out of.

Jackie says

These would be entertaining medical mysteries (think an episode of House compressed into a few pages) if the author didn't go out of his way to show no compassion to the patients. The patients are portrayed as punchlines, to be laughed at for being stupid--especially the people who have done harmful things because they're mentally ill. He even portrays doctors as laughing at their patients, or being exasperated by them; along with the pithy "ironic" punchlines he adds to many of the chapters, I'm extremely skeptical he knows this from reading medical journal articles. By far the worst example is the blatant transphobia: not only does the author mix up the terms transsexual and transgender, he repeatedly calls a transsexual woman a man and mocks her for being so body dysphoric she attempted to cut off her own genitals. Avoid this book--look for medical mysteries that avoid bigotry and stick to the facts.

Zoe Kauffman says

this was a good book. A little bit disturbing because they are real cases in medicine and some are kind of scary to think about because it could happen to you. I would recommend this book to people who like medicine or just arw curious
