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A LESSON SPEW WON'T FORGET..

Dr Ranj battles big food fright



PLEASE look away right now if you're easily upset.

TV's Dr Ranj Singh is about to open up about his childhood sweetcorn nightmare.

"I remember, it was just before a school PE lesson," he tells me, tapping into a memory that clearly still haunts him. "I was feeling a bit peaky in any case, probably coming down with something, but, yes, all of a sudden I remember violently throwing up and all this sweetcorn coming out."

"After that, I refused to go near the stuff for years."

Starting tonight, Dr Ranj's new series is helping people who'd sympathise with what he went through, not necessarily because they've vomited over a vaulting horse themselves but because certain foods simply freak them out, even in adulthood.

There's one woman, for example, who can't bear even to look at a vegetable. Another is horrified by the faintest whiff of garlic. There's even a chef who's afraid to taste his own dishes, terrified he'll gag.

Extreme Food Phobics, with its expert team, sets out to help their kind - using sympathy, gentle encouragement and hypnosis.

"Traditionally," Dr Ranj reminds us, "the attitude has been, 'Oh, they're just being fussy, they're making a big deal out of nothing.'"

"But now we realise these phobias have a huge impact on people's lives. They can be really debilitating."

Dr Ranj, pictured above, admits he personally had problems with sausages for a while. Yes, seriously.

"I remember hating them as a kid," he tells me. "I hated the smell, hated the taste, hated the texture."

"Luckily, I was able to get over it. Although it also helps that their quality is so much higher these days.."

Dr Ranj's attitude to food now is generally pretty positive. But don't expect to see him on a TV cooking contest anytime soon, much as he loves competing in reality shows.

"I've never done Bake Off, MasterChef or anything like that," he points out.

"I do love cooking, I love trying new recipes, but it tends to be a case of rustling up something quickly and easily, getting the job done rather than spending hours on it."

"Besides, I'd get terrified in a competitive cooking situation. It'd make me really nervous!"

Away from the telly, what he's recently done instead is make a name for himself as an author, particularly of books for kids.

None of those, I'm guessing, was written by hand. You know, Ranj, what with you doctors being notorious for their illegible scrawl, ha ha!

"Oh, no, definitely not!" he chuckles. "Obviously, my handwriting is terrible!"

● **Extreme Food Phobics starts tonight at 8pm on W.**

THE MIKE WARD INTERVIEW



DR RANJ TV DOCTOR