

Americans Saturated With Sugar

Physiology

Lack of vitamins and too much sugar in the diet was charged with being responsible for the large number of stomach and intestinal diseases in this country, in a report presented by Dr. Seale Harris of Birmingham, Ala., to the American Medical Association.

"Many sugar saturated, vitamin starved Americans, i. e., those who live largely on white flour bread, white potatoes, white rice, lean meats, sugar saturated coffee, and sugar laden desserts, with candy and soft drinks between meals, would seem to be susceptible to ulcer and other abdominal diseases in which infection plays a part," Dr. Harris declared.

Experiments have shown that animals and human beings who are not eating enough vitamins are very susceptible to all kinds of infections. Lowered resistance to infection occurs in the stomach and intestines as well as in the nose and throat. The person whose diet is lacking in vitamins may be subject to frequent colds, pneumonia and tuberculosis, or he may be subject to appendicitis, stomach ulcers, gall-bladder disease or colitis.

More than one-fourth of the patients in the general hospitals of the

United States are there because they have one of these stomach or intestinal diseases that are due to infection. The increased amount of abdominal diseases is paralleled by the increased sugar consumption in this country. Fifty years ago a man ate, on an average, 26 pounds of sugar in a year. Now he eats 106 pounds. That is equivalent to about a teacupful a day of sugar. White flour, potatoes and other starches have shown a corresponding increase in consumption.

Too much sugar and starch and not enough vitamins is the fault Dr. Harris finds with our national diet. He is at present studying the food habits of ulcer patients in the hope of obtaining further proof of his theory. He reported that "a very large percentage of patients with ulcer belong to the class who over-indulge in carbohydrates, particularly the sugar products that are deficient in vitamins."

Ulcer patients should be fed diets rich in vitamins, in order to build up their resistance and prevent recurrences, Dr. Harris recommended. The usual diet now given patients with stomach ulcers is very low in vitamins.

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Skate on Hypo "Ice"

Physics

Ice-skating in the movie-dramas isn't done on ice at all. The Hollywood climate is too balmy. Chemists have come to the rescue, and photographer's "hypo" has been substituted for the ice.

For example, the motion-picture director is desirous of staging a supposed Canadian championship skating tournament. Following the suggestion of Prof. Arthur R. Maas, industrial chemist of the University of California, he now buys a ton or two of hypo. The chemical is spread about the premises, groomed with a hot iron, cooled, and is ready for the skaters. All of the fancy stunts done on ice seem equally well performed on hypo, and the movie patron doesn't know the difference.

Hypo is known to chemists as a compound of sodium thiosulfate with a considerable quantity of water. At normal temperatures it is a dry, glassy, but somewhat soft solid of much the same texture as ice. Unlike ice, however, it melts at 118 degrees instead of 32.

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Mirror Writing Natural

Psychology

Parents should not become alarmed when a left-handed child starts to write in outlandish fashion so that the letters can only be read when held up to a looking glass. This reversed writing is as normal for the left-handed child as ordinary writing is for the right-handed, according to Edward C. Blom, of Columbia University.

Mirror-writing has always seemed a mysterious phenomenon, and scientists who have made investigations of it have produced a good deal of contradictory evidence. After making some investigations of his own and studying the evidence accumulated in the past 50 years, Mr. Blom reports to the *Psychological Bulletin* that while mirror-writing has sometimes been associated with feeble-mindedness and various types of mental and physical disturbances, it should not be taken as a sign of such defects in the left-handed person, because mirror-wise is the natural way to write with the left hand.

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NATURE RAMBLINGS

BY FRANK THONE

Natural History



Santa Claus' Steeds

Santa Claus rides through the air behind six fine reindeer, so they tell us. His neighbors, away up north, are the Lapps, who have used reindeer as sort of combination horses to haul their sleighs and cows to milk and eat, for many centuries. Probably Santa Claus got the idea from the Lapps and bought his steeds in some reindeer market in Lapland.

For the reindeer has been one of the useful animals almost as long as there has been a human race to make use of any kind of animal at all. Even before there were any Lapps, and very long before there was any Santa Claus, away back in the Stone Age, when all Europe was as cold and snowy as Lapland is today, the reindeer wandered far to the south. In those days people lived in caves and decorated their homes by drawing pictures of animals on the walls. And in caves far in the south of France we find drawings of the reindeer, which have never been seen that far south by any man who knew how to write a story about it. The drawings are all we have to show, but they are so well done that there is no doubt that the people who made them knew the reindeer. And there are so many drawings, some of them showing whole herds of reindeer, that we know there must have been many of these animals in the south of Europe during that far-away time.

One other evidence we have of the presence of reindeer in the France of the Stone Age. That is the bones and horns of the animals themselves. In the caves where the cave men lived we find the bones they threw away after they had eaten the meat—for cave men were untidy housekeepers. Some of the antlers they carved into tools, and these were often decorated with pictures.

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