

MEDICINE

Capsule Before Breakfast Gives Immunity to Colds

HALF as many colds during the winter, or even less, as a result of a capsule taken before breakfast. It sounds like a dream or a patent medicine advertisement.

The dream came true, however, for several hundred persons who were the human guinea pigs in the common cold research of Drs. George E. Rockwell and Hermann C. Van Kirk of the University of Cincinnati and Dr. H. M. Powell of the Lilly Research Laboratories, Indianapolis (*Science*, Aug. 23).

The capsules contained measured amounts of cold vaccine made of pneumococci, an influenza organism, streptococci and another organism found in the nose and throat and known to scientists as *M. catarrhalis*. The capsules were taken with half a glass of cold water half

an hour before breakfast. One capsule was taken each morning for a week and thereafter one or two were taken each week throughout the season.

Of the 445 persons taking the vaccine, 399 had 1,089 fewer colds this year than usual, the scientists report. This is a 70 per cent. decrease. The 469 controls, who did not take the vaccine, showed a decrease of only 299 colds during the year, or slightly more than 26 per cent. decrease.

"An essential decrease of 43.7 per cent." is the way the scientists put it. Looking at the figures in their tables, it appears that whereas the subjects of the experiment usually had about four colds a year, each had only about one the year the vaccine was taken. Getting away from figures, the scientists report that nearly all those taking the vaccine said they were "greatly benefited" by it.

Another group studied consisted of 46 persons who had suffered from practically continuous colds. Of these, 43 suffered from less than one cold per person during the season in which they were given the vaccine.

Part of the success is ascribed by the scientists to the make-up of the vaccine, that is, to the kinds and proportions of different "germs" in it. Another advantage was considered to be the fact that the vaccine could be taken by mouth. As a result it was easier to give it at the frequent intervals which are necessary in order to get the best results. This is because immunity or resistance to the bacteria of nose and throat infections does not last long and must be renewed by frequent doses of vaccine.

Science News Letter, September 7, 1935

MEDICINE

Cancer Experts Warn Against Hope From Lead Treatment

WARNING against entertaining hope for the successful treatment of cancer by lead has been issued by the Memorial Hospital for the Treatment of Cancer and Allied Diseases, New York City.

The warning was given by the experts on the staff of this cancer hospital fol-

lowing reports from the American Chemical Society meeting in San Francisco of improved technic in utilizing lead for cancer treatment. (*SNL*, Aug. 31).

The reports were "received with scepticism and regret" at Memorial Hospital where lead treatment was given an extensive trial and then abandoned because the general poisonous effects of lead were found too severe.

"No method of combatting the chronic toxic effects of lead has been found," says the statement issued by the hospital.

"Neither lead, nor any heavy metal, has any special affinity for tumor tissues. Lead deposits, especially in the liver and bones, exert anemic effects for a long time afterwards.

"No new results of newer lead therapy methods seem to justify raising new hopes that lead will prove a desirable method of treating advanced cancer."

Dr. Bradley L. Coley especially, from personal experience, endorsed this view.

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Extract of Maternal Tissue Successful Against Measles

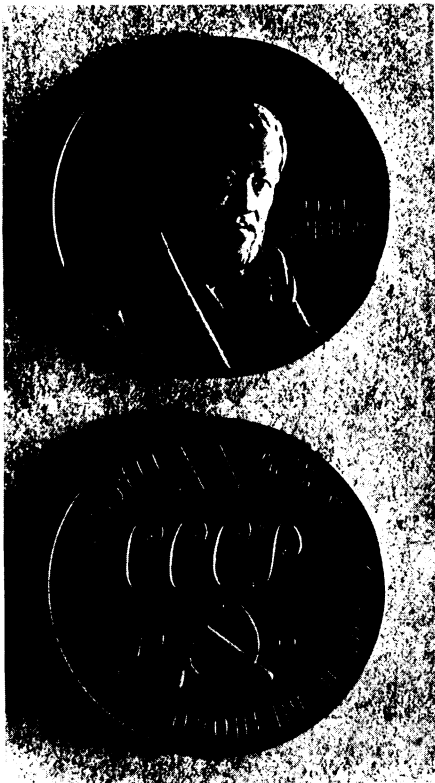
NO SUITABLE measure for dealing with the most infectious of all childhood diseases — measles — had been found until recent experiments with a protein material obtained from the bodies of human mothers have been reported.

Newborn babies do not have measles, but the immunity, evidently derived from their mothers, disappears very early. Measles and the complications that follow it are then acknowledged as among the most dangerous of all diseases of infancy and early childhood.

Encouraging evidence regarding the new treatment reaches the medical world through the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Aug. 17). The medical publication devotes a major article, a scientific report from its council on pharmacy and chemistry, and an editorial to this important new preparation.

Dr. Irving W. Levitas, a specialist in children's diseases, Westwood, N. J., describes twenty-eight cases of fully developed measles treated with the new substance. Of these twenty-five children were greatly benefitted, particularly in regard to cough and toxicity.

When Dr. Levitas gave the new treatment to eighteen other children one or two days after they were exposed to measles, he was able to modify the course of the disease so that in fifteen cases the symptoms were extremely mild.



COMMEMORATING A CONGRESS

Commemorating the Fifteenth International Physiological Congress recently held in Leningrad and Moscow, a bas-relief medal portraying I. M. Sechenov, founder of Russian physiology, was struck by the Soviet Mint.