

MEDICINE

B Vitamins May Have Bearing On Human Cancer Problem

Sores of Mouth and Tongue Often Seen With Cancer Cleared Up in Some Cases By Huge Doses of Yeast

REPORTS hinting strongly that the B vitamins have a bearing on the cancer problem were presented by Dr. Jules Abels, Memorial Hospital, New York City, at the meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research in Boston.

Sores of the mouth and tongue, of the kind often seen with cancer of the mouth and tongue and sometimes called forerunners of cancer, cleared up in some cases when patients were given large doses of brewers' yeast, Dr. Abels reported. Some of the results were spectacular, but in other cases improvement was not so marked. Huge doses of yeast, from two to four ounces daily, were required to effect the improvement. Dr. Abels said the patients were "a bunch of martyrs to take it."

Whether it was the B vitamins or some other substance in the yeast that caused the improvement was not stated. About half the patients who developed the mouth and tongue sores had either been eating poor diets, lacking in vitamins, or had some stomach or liver ailment which would interfere with absorption or use of the vitamins if they did eat enough of them.

Leukemia, the cancer-like blood disease, also has some relation to one of the B vitamins, thiamin. The white blood cells, of which there are far too many in leukemia, cannot utilize thiamin as normal white blood cells can, Dr. Abels has discovered.

Science News Letter, April 11, 1942

Test for Vitamin Need

A SIMPLE test for determining who needs vitamins and who is already getting enough of them was announced by Dr. V. A. Najjar and Dr. L. Emmett Holt, Jr., of Johns Hopkins University, at the meeting of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. The test is made after a twelve-hour overnight fast.

If, during the thirteenth hour, the person tested is still excreting vitamins

via the kidneys, he probably has a good surplus and does not need any more than his diet has been furnishing. If he is not excreting them thirteen hours after dinner, he probably needs to take more vitamins. The test so far has been limited to three of the B vitamins — thiamin, riboflavin and nicotinic acid.

Science News Letter, April 11, 1942

Fat Linked With Cancer

THE DAY when a diet to prevent cancer may be evolved seems a little closer as a result of reports to the American Association for Cancer Research.

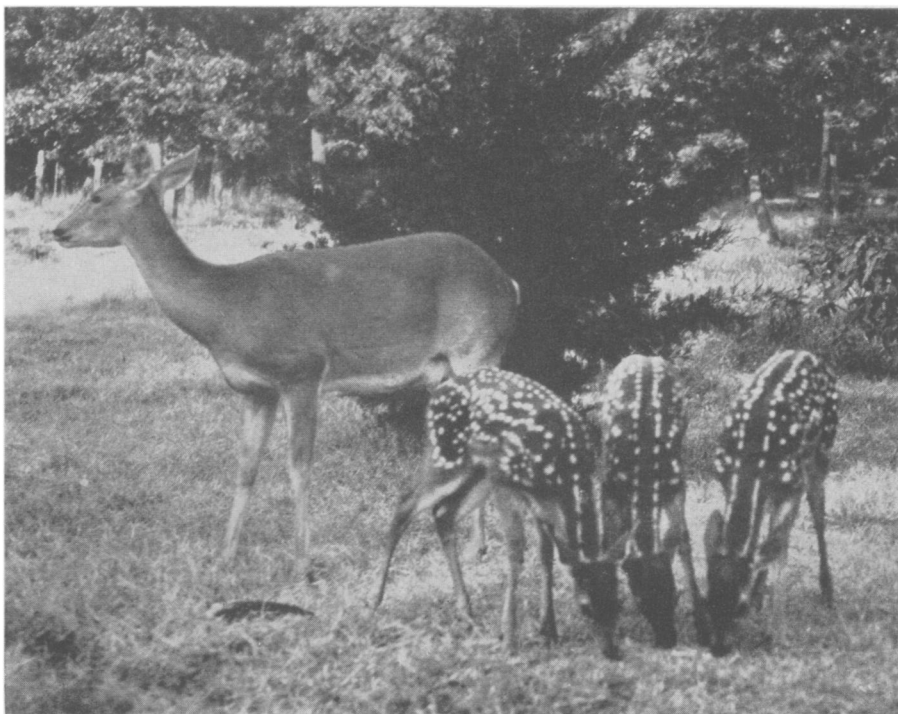
Three types of diets: 1. a weight-

reducing diet; 2. diets in which a special food chemical is omitted; 3. diets in which certain food chemicals are carefully balanced, are the possibilities seen, although most of them relate to laboratory animals and much of the evidence is still conflicting.

The case for a reducing diet as a cancer preventive was presented by Dr. Albert Tannenbaum, Michael Reese Hospital, Chicago. Human insurance statistics, he noted in a previous study, showed that apparently persons of average weight or less are not as likely to have cancer as those who are overweight.

Turning to the laboratory for further light on this finding, Dr. Tannenbaum put mice on reducing diets. The diets contained all the vitamins, minerals and other essential food elements, but were short on starches and sugars in order to reduce the number of calories. The mice on the reducing diets consumed on the average about two-thirds the amount of food taken by a control group of mice allowed to eat all they wanted.

"Invariably in the underfed groups, tumors (cancers) developed in markedly



THREE OF A KIND

Triplet fawns are somewhat of a rarity among deer, the usual rule being that a doe produces a single offspring at her first parturition, and twins every year thereafter. These three fine youngsters were the "family" of Dolly, a pet doe on the Wichita National Forest, in Oklahoma.