

MEDICINE

Painless Childbirth

Hundreds of mothers have had babies in comfort and safety without loss of consciousness thanks to new method of anesthesia.

➤ MORE THAN 700 mothers in the last year have had their babies in complete comfort and safety, without pain and without loss of consciousness, thanks to a new method of childbirth anesthesia. Details of the method, developed by Dr. Robert A. Hingson and Dr. Waldo B. Edwards, of the U. S. Public Health Service, are reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Jan. 23).

"Continuous caudal analgesia" is the technical name of the new method for banishing the pain of childbirth. It consists of continuous injection near the base of the spine of a pain-killing chemical, metycaine. The drug temporarily blocks the nerve pathways for pain but does not affect those controlling muscles needed for voluntary delivery of the baby.

The injections are started while the mother is in her room in the hospital.

She does not become unconscious but can eat, sleep, read or talk to visitors until just before the baby is ready to be delivered. At this time she is taken to the delivery room, but the anesthetic injection continues until she is ready to be taken back to her room after the baby's birth.

"One hundred per cent effective" and "perfect painless childbirth" without harmful effect on mother or child are among the comments of doctors who have used the method, as quoted by the editor of the *A.M.A. Journal*. The editor considered the results reported by Dr. Hingson and Dr. Edwards so significant that he promptly assembled, for the benefit of physicians generally, the opinions of other doctors having experience with the method. Although it has been in use for only a year, the experience in the opinion of the A.M.A. editor, seems to "warrant the belief that it constitutes a

real advance in securing relief of pain for mothers during childbirth."

The doctors who devised the method report using it or supervising its use in 589 cases with no complications or deaths among the mothers. Three of the babies died, but not as a result of the anesthetic. Use of the method in another 20 cases, with three failures for two of which the exact cause was difficult to determine, is reported in the same issue of the *Journal* by Dr. Thomas G. Gready, Jr., and Dr. H. Close Hessel-tine, of the University of Chicago and Chicago Lying-In Hospital. From Syracuse (N. Y.) University College of Medicine 85 successful cases are reported and from the Mayo Clinic another 50. Altogether it has been used in about a score of institutions.

The method, it is emphasized by all the doctors reporting on it and by the editor of the *A.M.A. Journal*, should be used only in hospitals and only by competent physicians and anesthetists specially trained to give this type of anesthetic.

Science News Letter, January 30, 1943

PUBLIC HEALTH

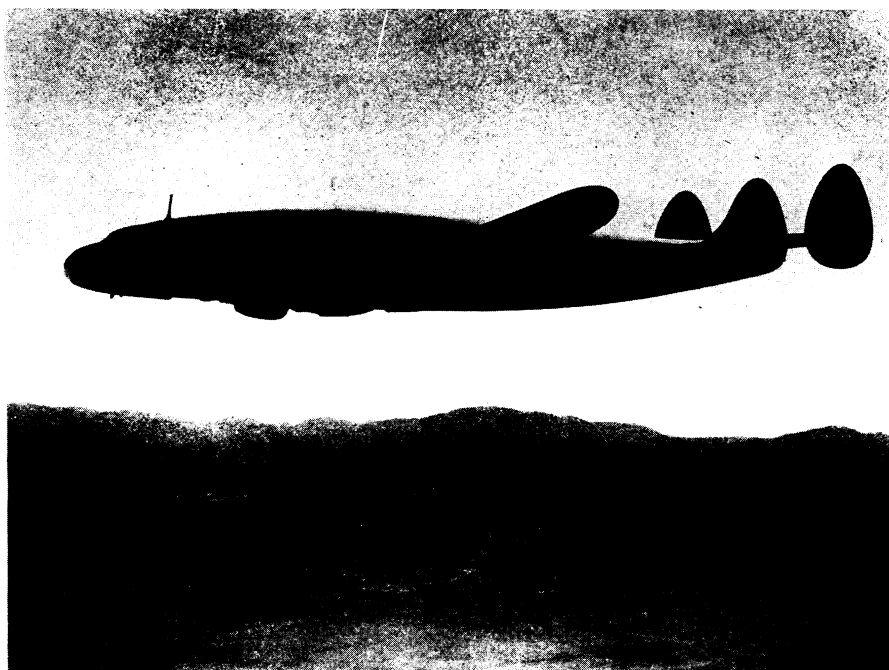
Learn How to Use Rabbit Meat Safely

➤ WITH THE SHORTAGE of other kinds of meat, wild rabbits are likely to be used for food more than usual this year. Rabbit hunting is good sport and the meat is a nutritious supplement to the diet, particularly valuable right now, the New York State Health Department points out. Contact with wild rabbits, however, does bring a certain risk of getting sick with tularemia or "rabbit fever."

Hunters, housewives, chefs and others who handle wild rabbits should know the simple precautions which will protect them against this distressing disease. Measures suggested by the New York Health Department follow:

1. Leave the too-easily secured rabbit alone. If a rabbit is an easy shot, the chances are it is ill, and may be infected with tularemia.

2. Do not clean the rabbit if you have any sores, cuts or other lesions on your hands. Even if you have no such lesions, it is well to wear rubber gloves when cleaning the rabbit and to wash the gloves thoroughly with soap and hot water before taking them off. Infection is usually acquired through contact with the blood or internal organs of rabbits and in almost every single case which has occurred thus far in New York State,



"CONSTELLATION"—New largest and fastest land-based cargo or transport plane, is the new Lockheed powered by four Wright Cyclone engines. It is said to be able to carry as many as 57 persons all the way across the continent in 9 hours.

there is a history of a cut or other lesion on the hand through which the infection apparently penetrated.

3. Be very careful in the process of cleaning the rabbit not to cut yourself with the knife, puncture a finger on a broken rib, or in some other way cause a break in the skin.

4. Cook the rabbit meat thoroughly. The infection can be acquired by eating insufficiently cooked infected rabbit meat.

The precautions apply, of course, to the dressing and cooking of rabbits bought at market as well as those you or some relative or friend shoots.

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MEDICINE

Heart Disease No Bar To Industrial Employment

➤ HEART disease need not bar the patient in every case from industrial employment. Many thousands of heart patients and probably most of the 10% or so of young men rejected for the army because of heart and blood vessel disease would qualify physically for positions in industry.

Statements to this effect were made by both Dr. Rufus B. Crain, of Rochester, N. Y., and Dr. O. F. Hedley, of the U. S. Public Health Service, before the committee on cardiac clinics of the the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association.

From experience at the Eastman Kodak Company, Dr. Crain reported evidence that "with careful placement and medical supervision" persons with heart disease and high blood pressure "can be continued in employment without risk.

"This experience should encourage the hiring of individuals in the same category as new employees," he declared.

The right to work when physically handicapped is one of the practical, far-reaching gains for labor and society which is being reached through the war and which should be held after the war, Dr. Hedley pointed out.

In the case of heart disease the importance of continuing to make it possible for the patients to work can hardly be exaggerated, because with the aging of the population, the numbers with heart disease will continue to increase.

In the future, society will be faced with the choice of obtaining employment for the increasing group of heart disease patients or otherwise providing a means of livelihood through some form of taxation.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

40 To Meet in Washington

These 11 girls and 29 boys (proportion determined by ratio of boys and girls entering the contest) are being invited on all-expense trips to Washington, D. C. Feb. 26 to March 2, to attend the Science Talent Institute, where one boy and one girl will be awarded \$2,400 Westinghouse Grand Science Scholarships, 6 boys and 2 girls will be awarded \$400 Westinghouse Science Scholarships and \$3,000 additional in Westinghouse Scholarships will be awarded at the discretion of the judges.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles Green, Joseph M. 16 Dorsey High School
Redondo Beach Reichtin, Eberhardt 16 Redondo Union High School

CONNECTICUT

Bridgeport Wojciechowski, Wanda Clara 16 Bassick Senior High School
Lakeville Sargent, Charles Philip 17 Hotchkiss School

FLORIDA

Winter Haven Folger, Robert Lancaster 16 Winter Haven High School

ILLINOIS

Carbondale Robertson, Claron Atherton 17 University High School
Chicago Palombi, Robert Edmund 17 St. Mel High School
Oak Park Foster, Elizabeth Jane 16 Oak Park-River Forest High School

IOWA

Ames Lauer, Gloria Indus 17 Ames High School

MAINE

Bethel Sawyer, Constance Bragdon 16 Gould Academy

MISSOURI

Independence Dickinson, Hillman 16 William Chrisman High School
St. Louis Lauenstein, Milton Charles 16 Southwest High School

NEW MEXICO

Las Cruces Gill, John Ellis 17 Las Cruces Union High School

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Exeter Kohl, Henry Hiram 16 Phillips Exeter Academy
Concord Macy, Josiah, Jr. 17 St. Paul's School

NEW JERSEY

Irvington Haftel, Howard William 17 Frank Morrell High School
Trenton Mark, Robert Burton 17 Trenton Central High School

NEW YORK

Garden City Kunkel, Joan Lillian 17 Garden City High School
Geneva Pederson, Donald Penhallegon 16 Geneva High School
Irvington Cassidy, Judith Mary 15 Irvington High School
New Rochelle Ronder, Joan Leslie 16 New Rochelle High School
New Rochelle Schiff, Ray (Reinhart) 16 New Rochelle High School
New York City Rosenblatt, Murray 16 Evander Childs High School
Nyack Killingbeck, Marguerite Grace 17 Nyack High School
Rome McLoughlin, James Gray 16 Rome Free Academy

OHIO

Athens Hammerle, William Gordon 15 Athens High School
Columbus Piper, William Weidman 17 Grandview Heights High School
Dayton Perot, Charles Poultney, IV 17 J. P. McCaskey High School
Shaker Heights LeLievre, William Boyd 16 Shaker Heights High School

OKLAHOMA

Norman Ortenburger, Arthur Irving 15 Norman High School
Tulsa Willcockson, Roy 16 Central High School

PENNSYLVANIA

Johnstown Harris, Donald Rosswell 17 Central High School
Johnstown Strehler, Bernard Louis 17 Central High School
Lancaster Perot, Charles Poultney, IV 17 J. P. McCaskey High School
Matamoras Boop, Wayne Ellsworth 17 Matamoras High School
Philadelphia Fox, Joseph Milton 16 Overbrook High School
Philadelphia Kurfuerst, Leonard Charles 16 North East Catholic High School

WEST VIRGINIA

Clarksburg Quermann, Thomas Richard 17 Washington Irving High School

WISCONSIN

Madison March, Virginia Ellen 16 West High School
Shorewood Lean, Elizabeth Ann 17 Shorewood High School