

MEDICINE

Birth Control Aid

Keeping daily temperature graph advised as simple way to help couples using "safe period" method and also childless couples who want babies.

► CHILDLESS couples eager to have a baby and others using the "safe period" method for postponing or avoiding blessed events may both be helped by a method reported by Dr. Pendleton Tompkins, of Philadelphia. (*Journal, American Medical Association*, March 11)

The method depends on the fact that a woman's body temperature varies during the course of each month. During the first part of the physiological (not calendar) month it is relatively low, drops to a minimum when ovulation occurs and then rises sharply to a definitely high level which is maintained until the next physiological month starts.

Immediately following ovulation, or the escape of an unfertilized egg cell from the ovary, is the time when conception is most likely to occur. Because

of the sharp drop and subsequent sharp rise in temperature at the time of ovulation, a graph of the daily temperature provides a simple method, Dr. Tompkins states, for a woman to determine the "unsafe period" if she is practising birth control.

In the case of childless couples desiring a baby, the method is an adjunct to studies the doctor will make to diagnose, if possible, the cause of sterility in either the man or the woman.

The temperature variation is slight, only a few fifths of a degree, so the daily temperature must be taken, Dr. Tompkins points out, with the "utmost practical accuracy." He instructs his patients, among other things, to take the temperature immediately on awaking in the morning, before arising, eating, drinking or smoking.

Science News Letter, March 18, 1944

activity at the area the patient said was painful. It proved to be a tiny spot to which the thyroid cancer had spread. Some of the radioactive iodine used in treatment had followed the bit of thyroid cancer in its spread from the neck to the head and located it for the doctors before X-ray pictures could.

The possibilities along this new direction in cancer diagnosis are "limitless," the statement prepared by cancer authorities declared.

"Due to the susceptibility of certain tissues to take up specific substances," they stated, "new clues are revealed not only in diagnosis but also treatment. For example, irradiated zinc is deposited in the pancreas, irradiated sulphur in the skin, irradiated strontium in the cortex of bones. These suggestions should be rapidly pursued both as to diagnosis and treatment of cancer cases."

Science News Letter, March 18, 1944

GENERAL SCIENCE

Argentine Persecution Of Scientists Protested

► AN OFFICIAL protest against the persecution of Argentine scientists, educators and professional men who participated in issuing a Declaration for Effective Democracy and American Solidarity has been voiced by the American Association of Scientific Workers.

This declaration, in essence, "simply approves the principles of democracy and calls for the cooperation of free men in its preservation," the association stated in a letter to the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, issued from their national headquarters.

The association urged that "the government of the United States of America, in concert with other nations of this Hemisphere, take whatever actions may be most effective to the end that the Government of Argentina rescind its undemocratic decrees."

Among the 150 leading citizens of Argentina who last October signed this call for a democratic Argentina were many members of the staffs of the Universities of Buenos Aires, Rosario, Cordoba and La Plata, and therefore employees of the state. All the signers of the declaration have been dismissed from their posts and the medical men forbidden to practice.

Dr. Bernard A. Houssay, outstanding South American physician and professor, was one of those dismissed from their posts in Argentina and reported to have taken refuge in Uruguay.

Science News Letter, March 18, 1944

MEDICINE

"Cocktails" for Cancer

Radioactive phosphorus plus X-rays credited with 13% to 15% cures of certain groups of leukemias and malignant growths, cancer society announces.

► COCKTAILS of radioactive phosphorus combined with X-rays in treatment of leukemia, lymphosarcoma, plasma cell myeloma, Hodgkin's disease and polycythemia vera are "producing cures in certain disease groups of from 13% to 15%," the American Society for the Control of Cancer announced.

The announcement came in answer to a question submitted by Watson Davis, Director of Science Service, for discussion by cancer authorities who each year meet with and answer questions for newspapermen and women representing the National Association of Science Writers.

The combination of radioactive phosphorus and X-rays has been used to treat about 100 patients at Memorial Hospital. Chronic lymphatic leukemia is markedly improved as shown by a marked diminution in the number of white blood cells whose overproduction

is a feature of this cancer-like disease. The quality of the red blood cells also improves under the treatment. In cases of lymphosarcoma, there is a reduction in the size of the masses or tumors. There is marked improvement in cases of polycythemia vera. The radioactive phosphorus may be injected into a vein but doctors at Memorial Hospital prefer to give it by mouth.

A spectacular new field of diagnosis of cancer has been opened by the use of different substances given radioactivity through the cyclotron. One of these substances, irradiated iodine, has been used to treat both cancer and benign tumors of the thyroid gland. At Memorial Hospital one of the patients so treated later complained of pain in a small area of his skull.

Running a Geiger counter, a device for detecting radioactivity, over the patient's skull, the doctor found marked