MEDICINE

# Cocktails Help Heart

**Alcohol relaxes nerves and dilates blood vessels, letting blood reach heart and helping people with heart disease and high blood pressure.**

➤ COCKTAILS ARE GOOD for people with heart disease, doctors at a conference in Cleveland of the new American Foundation for High Blood Pressure agreed.

The reasons are that the alcohol relaxes the nerves, reduces tension and dilates the small blood vessels. Constriction of the blood vessels raises the blood pressure, and this in turn can damage the heart. In coronary disease and angina pectoris the heart is in trouble because it does not get enough blood from its constricted or blocked arteries. Dilating them with a cocktail helps.

The popular warning, "Watch your blood pressure," said to a friend who is about to get angry, carries an important medical lesson. Anger, as is well known, temporarily raises the blood pressure.

Less well known is the effect on the blood pressure of unconscious rages. When these are aggravated by a situation that causes conscious anger, the blood pressure may be raised and not go down when the conscious anger is relieved by a temper outburst.

Fair, fat and fortyish women may hold in their bodies, another clue to high blood pressure and artery hardening. This relates to the body's handling of a fat-like chemical, cholesterol. The chemical is found in increased amounts in the walls of hardened arteries. Feeding the chemical to chickens speeds the process by which cholesterol is deposited in the artery walls to thicken them and spoil their elasticity.

In gall bladder disease, which often afflicts the woman who is fair, fat and forty, the body does not utilize fats properly and fails to get rid of excess cholesterol.

Doctors are not yet ready to advise any special anti-high blood pressure diet on the basis of these clues, but they believe the clues should be followed by further research.

Heredity may be the number one factor to investigate in the search for methods of curing or preventing high blood pressure. Why repressed rage leads to high blood pressure in one person and not in another may be a matter of hereditary constitution.

A trace of some chemical taken in food or drink every day may play a role. If two parts per million of fluorine in drinking water can mean the difference between good and bad teeth, the same trace amount of some chemical may mean the difference between arteries that remain soft and elastic and those that harden.

*Science News Letter, March 29, 1947*

VETERINARY MEDICINE

# Livestock Disease Blitz

➤ A JOINT U. S.-Mexican "blitz" against foot-and-mouth disease below the Rio Grande is poised, ready to go into action now that the appropriation of the necessary $9,000,000 war fund has been put through Congress. Mexico has already pledged nine millions and a good bit over—and that is a good deal more for Mexico to spend than it is for us, on a ratio-to-national-income basis.

Wiping out the infection means wiping out not only animals known to be infected but also all healthy but unexposed animals in the neighborhood. The technique is rapid, drastic and ruthless.

First a deep trench is dug. This can be done quickly nowadays, thanks to the development in recent years of heavy earth-moving machinery. The condemned cattle are driven into it and killed by shooting. Then rubber-booted, rubber-clad men slash open the carcasses, to insure rapid and complete decomposition after burial. Quicklime is thrown into the trench, and earth filled in to a depth of at least five feet. Boots, rubber garments, barns, implements—everything that might possibly carry a trace of the virus—get a thorough scrubbing with strong lye water.

The quicklime may not be necessary, but it is used just to make sure. Deep burial really does the trick; the virus does not long survive contact with the soil and the aggression of the swarming soil micro-life.

A most important thing is not to leave any carcass where stray coyotes or other carrion-seeking animals can get at it. That is why deep burial is so much emphasized. Five feet of earth on top of a dead animal is more than any coyote, however hungry, will dig through to get a meal.

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Potency of *penicillin* is now measured by a quick photographic method developed at the University of California.


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