

PUBLIC HEALTH

# Longer Life Span Ahead

Within the next 10 or 20 years the average person may live to be 70 or more with the development of new disease-fighters and wider application of present ones.

► THE average length of life for the population of America should reach the biblical three score and 10 years within the next 10 or 20 years and may even go over the 70-year mark, statisticians of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company predict.

The average life span in the United States has already reached 65.8 years. This is a gain of 16 years since the turn of the century. Expectation of lengthening the average life to 70 years or more is based on the probable development of new weapons to fight disease and wider application of present ones.

"It may well be," the statisticians speculate, "that medical science is now at the threshold of discoveries in the fields of cancer and of the degenerative diseases, which knowledge, when crystallized and applied may add significantly to the biblical three score and ten."

Pneumonia and influenza are rapidly becoming minor causes of death. They now rank eighth as cause of death among the company's industrial policyholders whereas 10 years ago they were outranked as killers only by heart disease and cancer. They now take less than four of every 100 who die, whereas 10 years ago pneumonia and influenza accounted for 10 out of every 100 deaths from all causes combined.

A new record low death rate for tuberculosis was established during the first nine months of the current year among the industrial policyholders. The death rate from this disease is already below 35 per 100,000 whereas 10 years ago it was about 50 per 100,000 and 20 years ago almost 100 per 100,000.

New record low death rates were established so far this year for three of the four principal diseases of childhood, measles, scarlet fever and whooping cough, and for appendicitis.

The death rate from acute poliomyelitis declined sharply, reaching 0.4 per 100,000 although this is not a minimum.

Deaths from heart, blood vessel and kidney disease now make up about half the deaths from disease among the industrial policyholders and increased slightly over last year. Cancer, accounting for one-sixth of the total deaths, reached

a new high mortality for this period of the year.

The increases in cancer and heart, blood vessel and kidney disease, it is pointed out, reflect in appreciable measure the change to older age in the population group studied.

Diabetes mortality dropped slightly. So did mortality from suicides and accidents. The mortality from home accidents was the lowest in our history and the motor vehicle fatality rate is the lowest for any peacetime year since 1922.

*Science News Letter, November 22, 1947*

NUTRITION

## Home Economics Students Eating On Dollar a Day

► WORRIED about the high cost of living? Six seniors in home economics at Cornell University and their instructor are eating on \$1 a day or less per person.

Not in the least thin or emaciated, the co-eds are spending seven weeks of practical homemaking in a seven-room apartment in a college hall, and they are proving that well-planned, balanced and varied meals needn't be expensive.

In fact, one week's meals averaged 85 cents daily per person.

Meals are planned and prepared by a "cook" and "assistant cook," whose identity changes each week, and all marketing is done in local stores. The girls keep an eye out for "specials" and seasonal foods, and inexpensive meat cuts to help them keep within their budget. Marketing is done twice a week.

Far from frugal, a typical menu includes for breakfast: fruit juice, scrambled eggs, toast, jelly, milk or coffee. Lunch: Welch rabbit with bacon curls, lettuce and tomato salad, stewed apricots, cookies and milk. Dinner: Salmon loaf with egg sauce, snap beans, baked potatoes, shredded carrot and raisin salad, gingerbread with lemon sauce, and demi-tasse.

On Tuesdays when no meat is served, the girls substitute cheese dishes—fondue, soufflé, toasted sandwiches, macaroni casserole, and vegetable plates.

Luncheon sandwiches are sometimes open-faced to conserve bread.

The budget figure of \$1 a day was set last spring, so now, as prices rise, the girls must be even more economical.

One week, the average daily cost for meals hit 91 cents, but included in the week was a dessert bridge for 16—nine guests were invited. Pineapple mousse, chocolate macaroons, vanilla wafers, and coffee were served, and the budget could be stretched to include home-made chocolate raisin clusters.

In addition to cooking duties, the girls also act as housekeeper, assistant, manager, and even "mother" to a 4-months-old baby.

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