

MEDICINE

Polio Quarantine Useless

By the time an epidemic of polio is evidenced, every one has already come into contact with it. However, it is wise to avoid travel, visits and new contacts when possible.

► EVERY summer countless families throughout this land are made to feel like "modern day lepers," as one of them puts it.

The reason is that a child or some other member of the household has come down with polio. Good friends and neighbors who would ordinarily rally to help in time of trouble shun the victim's family.

In some communities you can tell where a polio victim lives, even though no health department quarantine placard is on the door. The neighbors cross the street to avoid passing too close and their children are hastily snatched back if they ride their tricycles or chase a ball across the invisible line.

All this causes needless mental suffering on the part of both the victims and the neighbors and friends who are miserably stifling their natural desire to help and show sympathy.

Strict and heavy quarantining for infantile paralysis does not stop polio epidemics, health and poliomyelitis authorities agree. All attempts to stop polio by quarantine have failed and authorities now consider it foolish to enforce it.

Shunning the victim's family is like locking the barn door after the horse was stolen.

Here is how the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis explains the situation: By the time an epidemic of polio is noticeable, the whole community has been well seeded with the virus that causes the disease. Every one has already come in contact with it. Those who are susceptible will get polio. Those who are not susceptible will escape being sick.

The incubation period, that is, the period between the time the virus gets into the human body and the person gets sick, is from three to 35 days. Your child may have gotten the virus at the same time your neighbor's child did. One of them may get sick three days later and the other seem perfectly well for a month before he comes down. But for that entire month he would be harboring the virus in his body. So keeping him and his family away from the first victim's family will not protect the second child.

National Foundation and other authorities do advise that you avoid travel and visits with people you do not see regularly and avoid new contacts where possible. If polio is not already in your community, you may not have gotten the virus. So you avoid contacts with people in another community who may already have the virus, even though they are not sick.

While no one knows exactly how polio spreads, authorities are agreed that it is through the intimate contact of close, daily living. Members of a family or household using the same dishes, children in a family or neighborhood playing with each other's toys are examples of this kind of contact. But no one knows until the first case develops whether anyone in the group has the virus. And by the time that first case develops, it is too late to stop its spread. Every one in the group is likely to have it, though they may not all get sick.

If you think of a bull's eye on a target with concentric rings around it, you get a good idea of the polio situation. The bull's eye is the center of the polio situation and the farther out the rings get, the fewer the cases.

A recent careful study of a polio patient's contacts showed this. Examination of stools from all the contacts showed that the patient's mother, father and 80% of his brothers and sisters were harboring the virus.

Among relatives and friends who came often to the house and occasionally spent the night, 20% were harboring the virus. Among acquaintances who came only once in a while for a brief visit and among boys and men delivering milk, groceries and the daily newspaper, only 5% were harboring the virus. Not all of these people actually got sick, they just had the virus in their bodies.

So if you are within the close circles of relatives and friends or neighbors who often stop in for meals, overnight visits and the like, you cannot protect yourself or your children by suddenly shunning all contact with the polio victim's family. But if you are in the outer circle of once a year visits or five-minute calls, you may protect yourself and your family by staying in that circle.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Stone Javelin Heads, Much Like Yuma Points, Found

► DIGGING with a bulldozer under 20 feet of dirt deposited by winds and floods of centuries, scientists of the Smithsonian Institution found a site where Indians had camped some 5,000 years ago. The discovery was made at the Angostura reservoir near Hot Springs, S. D.

Under the direction of Richard P.

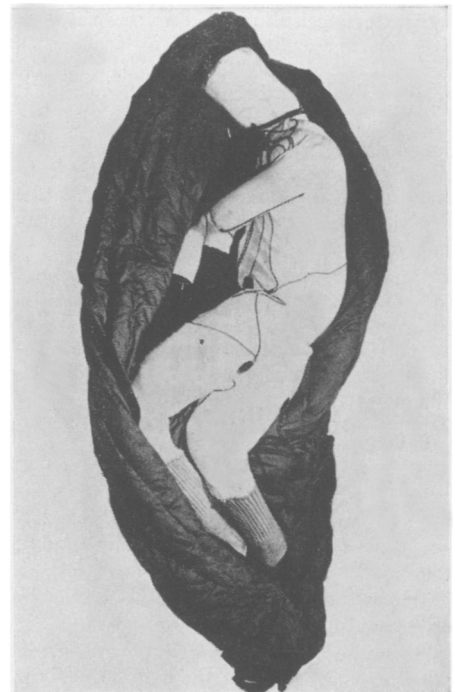
Wheeler, they dug up some ancient stone javelin heads. With the stone weapons were some animal bones, in such bad condition that it is impossible to tell whether they are the remains of extinct animals or whether they are of species still living.

The javelin heads are very much like the Yuma points found some years ago in New Mexico together with the fossils of extinct animals. The Yuma points are the finest job of flint chipping found in the New World in spite of their great antiquity.

The Angostura site is one of a number of reservoir sites being explored for archaeological treasure before they are flooded.

At the Garrison Reservoir in North Dakota, archaeologists under the direction of G. Ellis Burcaw found a fortified Indian village like others previously found along the Missouri River. The village is encircled by a moat and stockade built on packed earth walls with watchtowers at frequent intervals. It is like the European fortified villages of the Middle Ages, but was built in America before the coming of the white man.

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"LUMPY"—A manikin developed by the Army's Quartermaster Corps, gives information on the types of design and dimensions of sleeping bags which give the best protection against external cold. Electrical heat units underneath Lumpy's underwear are used to determine heat loss. The tendency of his internal stuffing to bulge in unpredictable places caused him to be dubbed "Lumpy."