



**SLUMBERING MICE**—In order to insure that a mouse receives the full and correct dosage of the new, apparently harmless sleeping chemical, Dormison, it is fed orally using the catheter method. The slumbering mice will awaken at different times, in proportion to the amount of Dormison fed to them.

## MEDICINE

## New Sleeping Medicine

Alert technician spotted mice unexpectedly taking naps. Now doctors can prescribe a sleeping medicine that is apparently safe for human use.

➤ BECAUSE SOME laboratory mice unexpectedly took naps and an alert girl technician recognized something out of the routine, doctors now have a new, apparently safe sleeping medicine for the millions of patients bothered by insomnia.

The new sleeping medicine is called Dormison by its manufacturers, Schering Corporation. Its chemical name is 3-methyl-pentylene-ol-3.

Good results with it in 134 patients who previously had to take barbiturates to sleep are reported in the journal *SCIENCE* (Oct. 12) by Schering Corporation researchers S. Margolin, P. Perlman and F. Villani and Dr. Thomas H. McGavack of New York Medical College and Metropolitan Hospital.

Most of the patients fell asleep in less than half an hour after taking capsules of this medicine. They had a restful sleep and no "hang-over" upon awakening. A number have been given daily doses of the chemical for more than five months without any adverse effects. Laboratory tests

showed no harmful changes that could be attributed to the drug.

Dormison is not a pain-reliever. It is the kind of chemical called a hypnotic, but is not related to any presently used sleeping medicines.

Its accidental discovery came about during research on the anti-arthritis remedy, cortisone. Schering chemists had isolated a fragment of the cortisone molecule which they thought might be the active anti-arthritis part of the chemical. This fragment was given to mice to test its possible toxic, or harmful, effects.

The mice immediately went to sleep. It was the kind of deep, hypnotic sleep that usually precedes their death. But to the surprise of Miss Marie Doyle, the technician who was watching them, the mice woke up, frisky and apparently rested. Miss Doyle reported her observations and the experiment was repeated. The results were the same and the Schering scientists realized that their chemical from cortisone might be a useful sleeping medicine.

Extensive testing showed that the drug is effective in inducing sleep, is apparently safe and, so far as is known from trials to date, is not habit forming.

The effects of an overdose can be counteracted by coffee, if the patient can be aroused to drink it, or by injections of caffeine.

Dormison is now available on a doctor's prescription.

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## PUBLIC HEALTH

## Check Health of School Child Each Morning

➤ GIVE JUNIOR and Sister a last minute check-up before they leave for school each morning, advises the New York City Department of Health in a pamphlet for parents called School Days.

Object of the check-up is to make sure the youngsters are not coming down with some serious catching disease. If a child is in the early stages of such a disease, he should be in bed and should be seen by the doctor as promptly as possible. This is for the child's own good.

It also will help prevent the spread of the communicable, or catching, diseases. If every parent followed this precaution, every child's chance of escaping measles or diphtheria or whooping cough would be improved.

Signs to watch for in the morning check-up at home are: flushed face, or fever; running nose, sneezing, cough, red throat, "pink eye;" skin rash; sores or blisters on the skin.

If you detect any of these the child should be kept home from school, advise health authorities.

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## MEDICINE

## Try Cathode Rays to Sterilize Blood Plasma

➤ STERILIZING BLOOD plasma by high energy electron rays instead of ultraviolet rays was suggested by Dr. Ernest E. Charlton of General Electric at the meeting of the Medical Society of the State of New York in Schenectady, N. Y.

Electron or cathode ray sterilization has been applied in the food industry and quite recently to sterilization of arteries for transplantation into the human body.

Advantage of the method for killing germs in plasma is that such sterilization can be done without heating the material, Dr. Charlton explained. Ultraviolet rays now used do not heat the plasma, but do not penetrate into it as deeply as high-voltage cathode rays would, Dr. Charlton stated. He believes that electron sterilization therefore would be more efficient although more work in the laboratory must be done to determine the effect of cathode rays on blood plasma.

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