

NUTRITION

Reduction May be More Dangerous Than Obesity

OVERWEIGHT is dangerous to the human body, but improper means of reducing weight may be even more so. Of the many women, who in recent years have adopted ridiculous dietary measures on their own initiative, some have suffered from extreme under-nutrition or ill health, and some even have died. The so-called eight-day diet is deficient from every standpoint. These matters were recently discussed by Dr. Clifford J. Barborka, of the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

It has been found that 70 to 85 per cent. of persons with diabetes are or have been obese, and that 50 per cent. of persons with high blood pressure are overweight. Many of those with gallstones, abnormalities of the heart, varicose veins, excessive perspiration and eczema are fat, and the surgeon knows that overweight adds to the risk if patients must undergo operation.

However, the condition seems to run in certain families. Then there are certain physiologic causes of increase in weight. The nursing mother tends to grow heavier; so does the patient who is convalescing from an operation or a prolonged illness. Increases in flesh are frequently seen at puberty, in pregnancy, and after the change of life in women.

It is an apparent paradox that certain persons get fat and that others do not on what appears to be equivalent diets. There can be no doubt that obesity is often the result of over-indulgence in food and lack of exercise, but certain persons gain weight on what appears to be a moderate intake of food, or even a restricted diet, and considerable exercise.

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MEDICINE

Must First Find Cause Of High Blood Pressure

HIGH blood pressure is a symptom, not a disease, and no cure can be expected for it until more is known about what causes it, members of the American Medical Association meeting in Philadelphia were told by Dr. N. S. Davis III, of Chicago.

A previous generation of doctors had the same attitude toward fever that the present generation has toward high blood pressure, or hypertension, Dr. Davis said. Formerly, doctors tried to

reduce fever by medicines, without considering the diseases of which it was a symptom. Physicians today are doing the same thing when they concentrate efforts on finding drugs or other means of reducing high blood pressure without trying to determine what disease is giving rise to the symptom of hypertension.

Dr. Davis' paper was based on a four-year study of the effects of salts of calcium as treatment for hypertension. Some of the patients seemed to improve at times and said they felt better, but in spite of this Dr. Davis concluded that the treatment was of little value. His experience emphasized the opinion that the value of any treatment for this condition can be determined only after months or years of trial.

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PHYSIOLOGY

Early Detection of Deafness Will Salvage Whole Life

URGENT need of discovering defective hearing in very young children, and of salvaging what hearing they have before it is lost forever, was brought before the meeting of the Federation of Organizations for the Hard of Hearing, in Chicago last week, by Dr. Richard O. Beard, of the University of Minnesota.

"Watch the baby of today in his reactions to the electric door or telephone bell," he said, "or to the flash of electric light, to the sight and touch of his many toys, to the taste and odor of his varied diet, to the vocal attentions of his family and his ubiquitous friends."

The young child whose hearing is even partially impaired needs to have intelligent first aid as soon as the handicap is discovered. The tendency of parents to try to hide the fact of a child's defective hearing was deplored by the speaker, who said that such a policy robs the child of a start in life.

Physicians are coming to doubt whether more than a very small percentage of young deafened children are totally stone-deaf, Dr. Beard continued. And a residue of hearing, even though small, may be put to good use in teaching the child to use its voice, to use what hearing it has, to read the lips, and to live a more normal social life. But if the remnant of hearing is not salvaged by proper educational methods, the child who cannot hear distinctly may lose the habit of listening at all, and with disuse the organs of hearing become still further impaired.

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IN SCIEN

ASTRONOMY-ARCHAEOLOGY

Mayas Predicted Eclipses to a Day

NEW RESEARCHES on the astronomical knowledge of the Mayas were presented in Berlin at a session of the Prussian Academy of Sciences by Prof. H. Ludendorff, director of the Astrophysical Observatory at Potsdam.

Prof. Ludendorff has found that the times of the eclipses of the sun and the moon were known with accuracy even before the Christian era. He has succeeded in deciphering pages 51 and 52 of the Maya codex in the Dresden collection and finds that the days of these and other heavenly events correspond exactly with modern tables.

The calculation by Spinden of the difference between Mayan time counting and ours is also verified by this research.

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ENTOMOLOGY

Laboratory Grows Worms That Prey on Jap Beetles

WORMS that seem to be effective enemies of the destructive Japanese beetle, destroying them while they are still in the grub stage underground, have been successfully reared in large numbers by laboratory methods, reports Dr. R. W. Glaser, of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, in *Science*.

The worms, which belong to the large class known as nematodes, were found infesting beetle grubs in a limited area in New Jersey. In this area the death-rate of the grubs was considerably higher than elsewhere, and it was believed that the worms had something to do with it. Efforts were therefore made to cultivate the new species in the laboratory, and Dr. Glaser was successful in propagating it in large numbers, feeding it entirely on artificially prepared foods.

It is hoped that the new species of worm, reared in quantities, may afford a means for combatting the Japanese beetle pest.

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CE FIELDS

ECONOMICS-AERONAUTICS

Herbert Hoover, Jr., to Undertake New Research

PRELIMINARY arrangements have been completed for Herbert Hoover, Jr., son of President Hoover, to undertake at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, a new field of research, business economics in relation to aeronautics.

Dr. Wm. B. Monro, an institute executive, revealed that Prof. Horace Gilbert, classmate of young Hoover at Harvard, has been negotiating with Mr. Hoover to study in Pasadena. While associated with Western Air Express as radio engineer, Mr. Hoover resided in the city. Mr. Hoover, who was a high ranking student and professor at Harvard, will be a valuable part-time addition to the institute's staff as both economics and aeronautics research have become important divisions of the educational institution.

The research expected to be undertaken by Mr. Hoover will be a new field, Dr. Monro said. With the rapid advance in recent years of aviation, the economic side has not kept abreast. With the Guggenheim Graduate School of Aeronautics of the California Institute of Technology as a center of aviation interest, and the accumulation of economic data by Dr. Monro and professors under him, Mr. Hoover will be in personal touch with the latest developments for research in the new field in which he contemplates pioneering.

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PSYCHIATRY

90 Per Cent of Mental Ills Called Due to Environment

PROBABLY ninety per cent. of all mental disease is due to environment, rather than heredity, and can be prevented, Dr. Marion Kenworthy, well-known woman psychiatrist of New York, declared before the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association.

Dr. Kenworthy, who has studied children especially, said that psychiatrists regularly see parents handling children

so as to precipitate tantrums, fears and other emotional conditions which may have far reaching results in mental health. Children's behavior problems are more important than rickets and get less expert attention, Dr. Kenworthy believes. Few parents know when to guide and repress a child and when to give it freedom. The psychiatrist urged that parents should learn some of the principles of mental development while their children are very young or even before the children arrive.

Specific ways in which parents may bring up their children to become hypochondriacs were stressed by Dr. David M. Levy of New York. The father whose favorite topic of conversation is his indigestion, and the mother who frets lest her children catch cold or get hurt are brewing trouble, he warned. The child who lives in a sick social atmosphere tends to develop an excessive concern about his body.

Showing how such ideas may dominate a child's mind, Dr. Levy cited one boy who knew every other boy by his ears, merely because his own ears were rather large. Parents should reassure their children about their good points of hair or eyes, and should encourage healthiness and happiness rather than morbid self criticism, Dr. Levy said.

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PHYSICS

Typewriter Found Noisy as Starting Electric Train

A TYPEWRITER makes as much noise as an electric train when it starts. This is one of the many interesting results which have been obtained by A. H. Davis of the National Physical Laboratory, England, who has recently been making a study of noises. He compares loudness levels by the use of a tuning fork.

Mr. Davis has found that the noise inside the cabin of an airplane during flight is very much louder than that of an express train. An automobile horn is as loud as a subway train. Experiments in the first and third class compartments of a British train showed that the noise levels were the same when the windows were open, but when the windows were shut the first-class compartment was the quieter.

Loud radio speech made as much noise as a railroad passenger car going at 35 miles an hour. A very noisy restaurant made the same amount of noise as a typewriter.

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PALEONTOLOGY

New Find May be Broken Dinosaur Egg Shells

DINOSAUR bones, and what may be bits of dinosaur eggshells, have been found in the hills of Arkansas by S. L. Powell, geologist of Blue Ridge Summit, Pa. He expects to return to his hunting ground this summer, and hopes to clear up the question of whether the limy flakes he found on a former expedition were dinosaur eggshells or not.

In the vicinity where the "egg shells" were found a discovery of one undoubted dinosaur skeleton—probably a plesiosaur—has been made, together with scattered fossils of others. In two spots collections of thin flakes of limy material were found, each collection of fragments being equivalent to what would be yielded by one broken egg.

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PHYSIOLOGY

Advises Deaf to Avoid Annoying Mannerisms

ELEVEN annoying mannerisms of deafened persons were described and criticized at the meeting in Chicago of the American Federation of Organizations for the Hard of Hearing by Elizabeth Brand of Dayton, Ohio. Miss Brand spoke from her own experience as a deafened person and as a teacher of lip reading.

Foremost among the mannerisms which she urged her fellow-deafened to avoid was irresponsibility. She said that this lack of responsibility was due to the attitude of hearing persons toward the hard of hearing, but she urged the deafened to take responsibility upon themselves, both individually and as a group.

Other bad habits of deafened persons which she described were apathy; talking too much, or too loud or too softly, getting too near the person addressed; being supersensitive and suspicious; requiring people to scream when lip reading or hearing devices would save this effort on the part of friends and relatives; gesturing; repeating; and exaggerating the speech. This latter fault, which Miss Brand called "an abominable by-product of lip reading," is also a fault of hearing persons when speaking to the deafened. Exaggerated and very slow speech make it harder to read the lips, she explained.

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