

PHYSIOLOGY

# Vitamins Promise Help In Struggle to Look Young

## New Diet Ingredients Turn Gray Hair Black; Suggests Future World Without Gray Locks

SCIENCE is attempting to bring to a weary world the cheerful if still speculative prospect of a future without gray hair, no matter what worry and trouble men and women have to face in that future.

The hope of such a development lies in things in food that turn gray hair to black.

These things may be vitamins. They may be minerals. Or both. Latest discoveries are that pantothenic acid, recently synthesized vitamin, and the minerals, iron, copper and manganese, have anti-gray hair effects. The pantothenic acid discovery was made by Dr. Claus Unna, of the Merck Institute for Therapeutic Research at Rahway, N. J. The anti-gray hair effect of the minerals is reported by Dr. Alfred H. Free, Western Reserve School of Medicine, (*Proceedings, Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine*, June).

These newly discovered anti-gray hair food ingredients, like a previously discovered anti-gray hair vitamin of the B complex, apply to rats, not necessarily to men and women.

Daily doses of pantothenic acid, starting in infancy, kept black rats from turning gray, Dr. Unna found. Rats turning gray on a deficient diet had their hair color restored by doses of this vitamin acid. Dr. Paul Gyorgy, of Cleveland, has obtained the same results with pantothenic acid in rat experiments. Rats that do not get enough iron, copper and manganese also turn gray, Dr. Free reports. Feeding the minerals restores the hair color.

Scientists refuse to say publicly that any of these diet ingredients will cure or prevent gray hair in men and women, but rumor says they can.

The speculation and the rumors may come to nothing but they seem worth presenting because the discovery of something to remove gray hairs in a world such as we live in would be worth more than a new explosive.

According to the rumors, picked up in corridor conversations at scientific meetings, conversations starting "Don't

quote me, but—," the anti-gray hair vitamin is being given to humans in carefully guarded experiments.

One relative of a well-known vitamin researcher is said to have grown a new crop of black hair on a previously bald head, by taking the anti-gray hair factor.

A lady scientist beginning to go gray is now said by her friends to have hair in a stage between gray and its natural color that suggests the gray is leaving. Without naming names, this scientist is in a position to have especially easy access to the anti-gray hair vitamin factor.

A number of men on the faculty of a university where much vitamin research is done are unofficially but authoritatively reported to be taking the anti-gray hair vitamin but the report does not specify with what results.

A young lady nutritionist started taking a potent concentrate of all the B

vitamins, for health reasons. Her friends report that she not only has regained her health but that the color of her hair has been restored as well.

Vitamin manufacturers, strangely, have not promoted any anti-gray hair product. The reason, I am told, is that they are afraid of the idea because of continued reluctance by scientists to give any hint that the anti-gray hair vitamin could be useful to humans.

So many persons, however, are now taking vitamins, particularly the members of the vitamin B complex which includes the rat anti-gray hair vitamin, that the human experiments may be going on without benefit of scientific blessings. It is easy to speculate that as a result of all the public vitamin-taking there will be few if any gray-haired men and women in the future, even though population scientists tell us there will be more and more old people in the world of tomorrow.

The discovery about the anti-gray hair minerals is too recent for rumors to have started.

Speculating on pantothenic acid's possibilities, however, one scientist (not Dr. Unna) said that since it also is a vitamin and can be made synthetically, doctors can give large doses of it to humans for trial.

In support of the idea that the anti-gray hair food ingredients may prove



### NEWCOMER'S WELCOME

*Favorite among new arrivals at the National Zoological Park in Washington, D. C., is a young pigmy hippopotamus, brought back from Liberia by Dr. and Mrs. William M. Mann.*

*Science News Letter, August 24, 1940*