

MEDICINE

Anti-Pellagra Vitamin Found Remedy for Meniere's Disease

Nicotinic Acid, Like Many Other Chemicals, Dilates Blood Vessels, But Patients Do Not Become Resistant

NICOTINIC acid, the anti-pellagra vitamin, has proved to be a successful remedy for Ménière's disease, Dr. Miles Atkinson, of the New York Hospital and Cornell University Medical College, reports (*Journal, American Medical Association*, May 2).

Ménière's disease is a disabling condition characterized by prostrating dizzy spells, ringing in the ears and even deafness. Only certain cure for the condition so far discovered has been a delicate and difficult nerve-cutting operation.

Search for a cure for the condition without surgical operation led to the announcement by Mayo Clinic physicians two years ago of histamine as a chemical remedy for the disease.

Nicotinic acid, however, succeeds in many more cases than histamine, in Dr. Atkinson's experience. He reports recoveries under nicotinic acid treatment of patients who had relapsed after temporary improvement or gotten worse on histamine treatment.

The histamine treatment was based on the theory that the patients were sensitive to this chemical which is normally produced in the body, somewhat as hay fever patients are sensitive to

pollens. The treatment consisted in giving doses of histamine to desensitize the patients.

Less than one-fourth the patients, Dr. Atkinson finds, are actually sensitive to histamine. Inexperience with the test for histamine sensitivity, he believes, has led doctors to use the treatment for many patients who are not sensitive to histamine.

At first this treatment seems to help even the large group that are not sensitive to histamine, because this chemical acts to dilate the small blood vessels. But these patients sooner or later develop a resistance or immunity to the histamine action on small blood vessels. Then their small blood vessels become more constricted than ever, and the patients are worse off.

Nicotinic acid, like many other chemicals, dilates the small blood vessels, but patients do not become immunized to its effect, so it continues to help them over long periods, and, of course, it is safe to take for indefinite periods.

A still better chemical remedy for Ménière's disease may be discovered, Dr. Atkinson points out, but nicotinic acid is the best he has yet found.

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MEDICINE

Protection Against Poison Ivy Provided By Ointment

U. S. Public Health Service Approves Two Formulas Tested at Two Government Camps and Boys' Camp

AN IMPROVED protective ointment against poison ivy has been developed and proved effective by the U. S. Public Health Service in tests at two government camps and a boys' summer camp.

Active ingredient of the ointment is sodium perborate which oxidizes the ivy poison. The sodium perborate was first

used in a vanishing cream base by the Public Health Service, but this base allowed the perborate's oxygen to escape and so the ointment became ineffective after two weeks.

The new ointment made with either of two bases will remain effective for several weeks if kept in a closed container.

The ointment should be thickly applied to exposed parts, such as the hands and face, if necessary, before contact with poison ivy. Clothes must be removed after exposure before the ointment is washed off, otherwise the unprotected skin may be exposed to clothes which have been contaminated. Tools and instruments or clothing which have been used in cutting poison ivy must be decontaminated before being used again. Decontamination can be effected by washing clothes or immersing tools for 15 to 20 minutes in a 1% solution of calcium hypochlorite.

The two formulas were developed by Dr. Louis Schwartz, Dr. John E. Dunn, and Dr. F. H. Goldman of the Public Health Service. The formulas are:

Formula 1

Castor oil	21.5%
Olive oil	21.5%
Lanolin, anhydrous	21.5%
Diglycol stearate	12.9%
Paraffin, refined	8.6%
Boric acid	2.0%
Sodium perborate	10.0%
Duponol WA pure	2.0%

Formula 2

Cetyl alcohol	35.1%
Stearyl alcohol	5.3%
Ceresin	3.5%
Castor oil	20.8%
Mineral oil	21.9%
Duponol WA pure	1.7%
Sodium perborate	10.0%
Boric acid	1.7%

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Cancer Diagnosed Early From Shed Surface Scales

DIAGNOSIS of cancer of the uterus in its early, curable stage is possible through a technic reported by Dr. George Papanicolaou and Dr. Herbert F. Traut of New York to the New York State Medical Society.

The technic depends on the fact that cancers of the uterus shed their surface cells, as trees shed their leaves, as a result of their rapid growth. These scaly bits from the cancer find their way to the upper portion of the canal leading from the uterus where they can be easily collected, spread upon glass slides, stained and examined under the microscope. This is true of cancer in both early and late stages.

Early, unsuspected cancers can be discovered, the doctors stated, by using this method in routine examination of women in the cancer-bearing age.

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