

NUTRITION

Prescriptions for Grocer

Wholesome food urged in place of vitamin capsules for prevention and treatment of dietary disease. A and D concentrates in winter an exception.

➤ "IN THE general prevention of dietary diseases and their treatment, the prescriptions should be filled at the grocery store rather than drug stores," Dr. Edward H. Hatton, Northwestern University professor of pathology and bacteriology, declared at the meeting of the Chicago Dental Society.

Sufficient vitamins can and should be eaten at the family dinner table as wholesome foods, the speaker maintained, with the exception of "obscure and chronic conditions when the administration of large doses of vitamin concentrates for relatively long times has yielded good results."

"Possibly the only vitamin concentrates that merit general use, and then only during the winter months, are A and D, either as concentrates or in the form of cod liver oil preparation."

Foods should also be the prescription for minerals. In general, the use of mineral salt preparations has little to recommend it.

There is no place in therapeutics where there is so much room for good judgment and common sense as in the prevention and treatment of disease through nutrition, the speaker said in criticizing the faddists and extremists.

Pointing out that dietary deficiencies are important to dentists since they involve the oral cavity, Dr. Hatton cited vitamin C deficiency as the one most commonly affecting the mouth.

Food dislikes and poor methods of preserving and preparing food were called the main reasons for the surprising prevalence of vitamin C deficiency.

Sulfa Drugs No Cure-All

➤ SULFA DRUGS are not a cure-all for dental infections, Dr. F. D. Ostrander of Ann Arbor, Mich., warned the meeting.

Although the sulfonamides have valuable dental uses, they have not given the spectacular results that have resulted from their use in medicine.

The greatest successes of the sulfas have been in treatment of extensive infections of dental origin, in cases where heart disease makes preventive measures necessary, and as local applications in war wounds, civilian injuries or infected extraction sockets.

"In no case," Dr. Ostrander pointed out, "is the use of a sulfonamide a substitute for careful operative, surgical or aseptic technic, nor for adequate post-operative care."

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NUTRITION

B Vitamins Now Number at Least 12

➤ WHILE MOST of us are still struggling to remember that there are three B vitamins, thiamin, niacin and riboflavin, and to get our daily quota of them, research scientists have run the count of B vitamins up to at least 12.

The growth requirements of rats, guinea pigs, monkeys and even microorganisms have been the chief sources of information about the newer B vitamins, and their exact role in human nutrition is not yet established. What has already been discovered about them, however, suggests, according to Prof. C. A. Elvehjem, of the University of Wisconsin, that further research may give scientists dietary means of handling diseases for which prevention and cure are still unknown just as vitamins and diet today are used to prevent scurvy, pellagra and rickets.

Folic acid, for example, is a new B vitamin that may be the key to prevention or cure of a blood disorder in which there are two few white blood cells. The condition occasionally develops after sulfa drug treatment has been given for a certain period of time, but it also develops independently of sulfa drugs.

One clue to a possible dietary means of controlling the condition came from the discovery that rats also develop it when given sulfaguanidine or succinyl sulfathiazole. These two drugs stop the development of microorganisms in the rat intestinal tract which normally manufacture some of the B vitamins. But the blood disorder also develops in monkeys on diets lacking folic acid. In both rats and monkeys the disorder can be prevented by folic acid. Perhaps it develops in humans after sulfa or certain other drugs because the patients had been on rather short rations of folic acid and could not stand further depletion by the drug of their reserve supply of this vitamin.

Biotin, inositol and p-aminobenzoic acid are other new B vitamins which recent evidence suggests play a role in human nutrition. The B vitamin tally is completed by pantothenic acid, pyridoxine, choline, two factors needed by chicks and one or more needed by guinea pigs.

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MEDICINE

Should Act Now to Prevent Postwar Misuse and Waste

➤ DOCTORS and manufacturers of drugs and surgical and medical supplies should act now to avoid postwar waste and misuse of these materials such as followed the last war, Col. Charles F. Shook, of the U. S. Army Medical Corps, declared at the National Conference on Planning for War and Postwar Medical Services held in New York under the auspices of the Carlos Finlay Institute of the Americas.

Following the last war, Col. Shook said, millions of dollars' worth of medical supplies were dumped on the market, causing ruin to many manufacturers. Even more serious, he added, were the numerous examples of inferior or spoiled medical equipment which was sold and used to the danger of public health. He referred specifically to surgical sutures which had been allowed to spoil and were then used, causing dangerous infection.

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