

NUTRITION

Advice Given To Go Easy On Use of Chocolate Milk

➤ MANY MOTHERS have for years been giving chocolate or cocoa-flavored milk to their children or others in the family. The object has been to get those who do not like the taste of milk to drink more of this healthful beverage. Doctors and nutritionists generally have approved the idea.

Now comes news of nutrition studies at Massachusetts State College suggesting that it may be wise to go easy on the chocolate milk, especially in wartime diets. (NUTRITION REVIEWS)

These studies with white rats showed that the presence of cocoa in the diet depressed the nourishing value of milk. The animals on the cocoa-supplemented diet were getting 11% more calories than those on diets without the cocoa. In spite of this, however, there was about an 11% decrease in the growth rate of the animals, 10.6% for the males and 12.3% for the females.

Previous studies had shown that cocoa decreased the digestibility of milk proteins. This is believed to explain in part

the depression of the growth rate in the rats with the cocoa supplement to their diet.

Even more striking were the figures showing that the rats on the cocoa diet retained almost a fourth less calcium than the animals on the non-cocoa diet, even though the cocoa diet contained more calcium. There were almost as great decreases in the amount of phosphorus the cocoa diet rats were able to utilize from their food.

The underlying cause or causes for the decreases in growth rate and mineral retention when the rats were on a diet containing chocolate milk are not

explained by the studies so far. Whether the chocolate milk taken daily would make the same difference in human nutrition apparently has not yet been investigated. However, with a sharp curtailment in milk supplies a possibility, it becomes increasingly important, as the editor of *Nutrition Reviews* points out, to utilize to the maximum the protein and minerals of the milk that is available. The findings on rats may, therefore, lead nutrition and medical authorities to issue a word of warning about the amount of milk to be taken as chocolate milk.

Science News Letter, June 17, 1944

MEDICINE

Rat-Bite Fever Remedy

➤ RAT-BITE FEVER, a weakening and sometimes serious disease, may yield to penicillin treatment, it appears from studies reported by Dr. F. R. Heilman and Dr. W. E. Herrell, of the Mayo Clinic. Assisting in the research were Miss Constance Carter and Miss Nellie Greenburg.

In this disease the fever comes one to three weeks after the bite of the rat. The bite itself usually heals without giving any trouble. The fever when it starts lasts for several days, drops, and then rises again sometimes to as high a 106 degrees Fahrenheit. It may be caused by either of two germs, *Spirillum minus* and *Streptobacillus moniliformis*. The

latter also may cause epidemic sickness which does not come from a rat bite.

Mice infected with either of these germs were cured by penicillin treatment, whereas untreated mice all got sick and 42 of the 43 infected with *Streptobacillus moniliformis* died.

Previous treatment for infections with these germs was to give arsenic-containing drugs or gold salts. Both of these medicines may be followed by toxic reactions. One of penicillin's great advantages is that it does not cause toxic reactions. The Mayo Clinic doctors therefore suggest that penicillin should prove useful in treating these infections in man.

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NUTRITION

Navy Tip To Housewives

Latest tip to housewives and restaurant chefs on conserving vitamins in salads comes from scientists at the Naval Medical Research Institute in Bethesda, Md.

Use a plastic knife instead of a metal one for cutting the vegetables and fruits for salads, cut them in large pieces, and prepare just before serving, is the advice of Dr. C. M. McCay and Dr. Michael Pijoan of the Research Institute and H. R. Taubken of the Naval Hospital Commissary.

Very little of the vitamin was lost when vegetables were cut with a plastic knife, compared to the losses when steel knives or the mess-hall mincing machine, called a "Buffalo chopper," were used, the scientists report. (*Science*, June 2).

Plastic knives, with a serrated edge like cake or bread knives, can be obtained at drug stores for 25 cents, Dr. McCay says. The "Buffalo chopper" is a bowl set under a pair of rotating metal blades. He and his colleagues suggest that a plastic bowl and knife might be devised for the "Buffalo chopper" for use in large-scale feeding establishments.

A considerable amount of vitamin C is lost when cut vegetables and fruits are exposed to the air, even when a plastic knife is used.

When a metal knife is used, Dr. McCay explained, enough iron is picked up in finely divided form to act as a catalyst to speed the oxidation which destroys the Vitamin C when cut vegetables or fruits stand exposed to air.

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