

NUTRITION

Allergy Causes Eczema

► THE MAJOR CAUSE of eczema in babies is allergy to some food or foods. Food allergy is also an important cause of this troublesome skin condition in older children, Dr. Milton M. Hartman of the allergy clinic at Stanford University School of Medicine, San Francisco, reported.

Milk, eggs and wheat are the commonest foods that cause allergic reactions such as eczema.

Then come other cereals, orange juice and peel, peas, tomatoes, potatoes, chocolate, spinach, nuts, fish, beef in milk-sensitive children, and chicken in those sensitive to eggs.

First step in the treatment is to take out of the child's diet as many of these foods as he has been eating. Mothers should not, however, do this on their own. The child's diet must be a balanced one containing all the elements necessary for nutrition and growth.

The best course is to take the child to the doctor and follow the diet he prescribes for the eczema, if he thinks it is due to food allergy.

Chances are he will prescribe a basic diet that includes soybean milk, lamb, gelatin,

rice, tapioca, apricots, applesauce, bananas, peaches, pears, beets, carrots, squash and string beans plus a synthetic vitamin mixture.

Then he will probably advise adding other foods periodically. The ones to add will be prescribed by the doctor just as the first basic diet is.

A pregnant woman with a family history of allergy should avoid dietary excesses, since there is good evidence that the mother's diet during pregnancy can affect the child's inherited sensitivities.

Such expectant mothers also should plan an environment for the baby free of animals, birds, feathers, wool and dust. Dr. Hartman strongly advises breast feeding because atopic eczema occurs far less frequently in breast-fed infants.

Foods become progressively less important as the child ages. The older the child, the more important are the materials he inhales or touches. House dust, feathers, kapok, wool, cotton lint, and the dander of cats, dogs and horses are the most frequent sources of trouble. Even the mother's cosmetics often are to blame.

Science News Letter, October 20, 1956

BIOLOGY

Find True Double Sex

► A BOY who at the age of 15 discovered that he was also a girl has been found in Jamaica.

He is now, after several operations to remove his unwanted female organs, "a cheerful, normal young man."

He was what medical scientists call a true hermaphrodite, meaning a true case of double sex. Only 60 such cases at most have been recorded in medical literature.

This, the sixty-first case, is reported by Drs. J. D. Arneaud, H. Annamunthodo, J. H. M. Pinkerton and R. W. Cole of the University College of the West Indies in the *British Medical Journal* (Oct. 6).

The patient lived in a remote Jamaican village. He lost his parents when he was a baby. He always dressed and behaved as a boy. His voice changed to average male pitch and he looked like a boy though his breasts were pendulous and he had very little hair on his face and none on his chest.

He first became worried that he might be a girl when at the age of 15 the female monthly periods started.

When the doctors in Kingston, Jamaica, examined him at the age of 18, they found he had complete sets of both male and female sex organs. The two ovaries were functioning.

Sex chromatin studies, recently discovered method of determining the sex a person is born with, showed this patient to be genetically female.

Repeated interviews, however, showed that he was definitely male in outlook. Consequently, the doctors undertook the operations to transform him into a man only. The womb and its opening, both ovaries and tubes and both breasts were removed and other repairs made in a series of operations.

He is now much happier, has found work he likes as a manservant and "is to all appearances a cheerful, normal young man."

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NUTRITION

American Fish Eating Habits Are Changing

► EASY AVAILABILITY of quick-frozen, packaged fish in supermarkets is changing the fish consumption habits of Americans, an international conference on fisheries was told.

American consumers are abandoning their habit of eating fish principally on one day of the week, according to Dr. Ralph Cassady, professor of marketing and director of the Bureau of Business and Economics Research at the University of California at Los Angeles.

A few years ago, housewives had to rely on a relatively few stores carrying fish as an accommodation for consumers, sometimes only on Thursday and Friday. Today

fish is available in the freezer cabinets of the large majority of supermarkets throughout the country.

Despite rising fish sales, marketing specialists pointed out that America is still overwhelmingly a meat-eating country, and probably always will be as long as supplies are available.

Traditional prejudice against fish, particularly in Midwestern areas, is so great that considerably lower prices for fish would not increase its sales to any great extent without special promotion efforts, Dr. Cassady believes.

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