

NUTRITION

Report on Fat in Diet

► FAT in the diet has not yet been proved the villain in heart and artery disease and any drastic change in fat intake is not justified as a way to prevent heart trouble.

This is the conclusion of the nutrition committee of the American Heart Association and the American Society for the Study of Arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). Their report is published in *Circulation* (Aug.).

"This is a time when great pressure is being put on physicians to do something about the reported increased death rate from heart attacks in relatively young people. People want to know whether they are eating themselves into premature heart disease. They are entitled to an unprejudiced answer," the researchers report.

There is not enough evidence now available to "permit a rigid stand" on the relationship between dietary fat, atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease. But the evidence that does exist warrants the most thorough investigation.

Just plain overweight is still a hazard and for those who should cut down on their calories, eating less fat is probably indicated.

Fatty deposits can be created in the arteries of rabbits by feeding them cholesterol in oil but in man the "real nub of the problem" is not simply a thickening of the arteries but their shut down or blockage by clots and plaques.

This is what causes heart attacks and strokes, but in laboratory animals, no matter

how severe the atherosclerosis is, this stage of occlusion is, in general, never reached.

There has probably been no real change in the amount of fat eaten by Americans over the past generation or two. Current army rations have a fat content almost identical with the rations provided for troops in the West during the late 1880's.

Authors of the report include Drs. Herbert Pollack and Charles F. Wilkinson Jr., New York University Post Graduate Medical School, New York, Dr. Fredrick J. Stare, Harvard School of Public Health, and Drs. Irvine H. Page and A. C. Corcoran, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio.

Science News Letter, August 31, 1957

PSYCHOLOGY

Formula O.K. for Baby's Diet, But Not Discipline

► IT IS ALL right to stick to a formula for baby's daily diet, but parents get into trouble if they try to be too rigid with a child's family relationships.

This is the belief of Dr. D. Bruce Gardner, visiting associate professor of child development and psychology at the University of California at Los Angeles. Dr. Gardner's regular post is at Iowa State College.

"The parent who attempts to discipline his children 'by the book,' that is, by rules laid down by some outside source, such as a lecturer, a minister or a writer on child psychology, is going to have an uncomfort-

able if not unsuccessful parenthood," he points out.

Dr. Gardner suggests the following rule of thumb for child discipline: Draw the line where you feel comfortable!

"Then you are more likely to be consistent in your discipline," he says. "Your words will not say one thing while your tone of voice and actions imply that you are not really sure of the wisdom of what you have said."

In a few extreme cases this rule of the thumb breaks down and parents should seek professional advice to help them review their values.

"Especially the parent who feels comfortable in giving his child complete 'freedom,' thus establishing household anarchy, and the parent who severely disciplines his child for every minor offense."

"These two types of children—one not knowing where to stop, the other not knowing where it is safe to start, or perhaps harboring resentment of all authority—will find themselves in serious conflict with their environment," Dr. Gardner says.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Neurosis Lasts 2 Years Even With No Treatment

► THE AVERAGE neurotic patient recovers from his neurosis in between one and two years even if he gets no treatment for it.

This finding, conflicting with the widely held view that neuroses are "tedious and self-perpetuating illnesses," is based on a statistical study of reported cases contained in the quarterly *Journal of the Milbank Memorial Fund* (July).

Neurosis is an illness of early adult life. The figures show a rising number of cases and of new cases during the twenties and thirties. The rise in total cases continues into the forties, but then is followed by a rapid decline.

The study is reported by Dr. Michael Shepherd of the Institute of Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital, London, and Dr. E. M. Gruenberg of the Milbank Memorial Fund.

The fact that fewer cases are reported for the later years may possibly not indicate that the patients have recovered.

Neurotic symptoms may, after a period of years, be less distressing to the individual and he may therefore complain less. And those who live with him may also become adapted to neurotic symptoms and find them less cause for complaint.

Physicians, when they observe neurotic symptoms in older persons, may be inclined to attribute them to some minor physical ailment and so not identify them as indicative of neurosis.

The reason for the termination of neuroses may not always be recovery, the investigators indicate. They may end by being transformed into another illness, or the patient may die.

They urge, however, a study of the special characteristics of young adults to discover what may predispose them to develop neuroses.

Science News Letter, August 31, 1957

MATH IS FUN

By Joseph Degrazia, Ph.D.

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