

HEALTH

ESTD. 1923

Edited by: Dr. U. RAMA RAU and U. KRISHNA RAU, M.P.

8 AUG 1946

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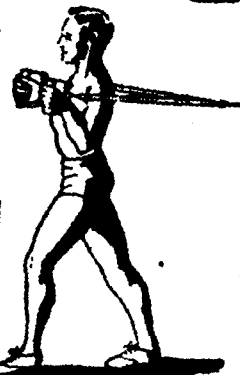
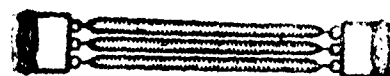
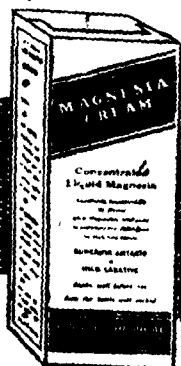
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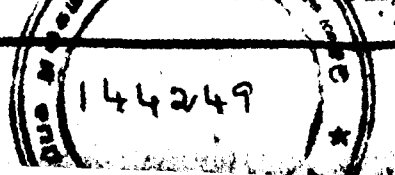
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HEALTH

ESTD. JAN. 1923

A Journal Devoted to Healthful Living

Edited by Dr. U. RAMA RAU & U. KRISHNA RAU, M.B., B.S.,

Annual Subscription: Rs. 2. Foreign: 0-4 sh. Post paid. Single Copy As.

Editorial and Publishing Office: 323-24, Thambu Chetty St., G. T. Madras.

ol. XXIV

JULY, 1946

No. 7

HEALTH EDUCATION

"We shall be building on unstable foundations if we hope to secure any rapid or lasting improvement in health conditions without arousing the living interest and enlisting the practical co-operation of the people themselves."

—THE BHORE COMMITTEE.

Arousing the living interest and enlisting the practical co-operation of the people are to be achieved, it is necessary that they should be educated on problems relating to health. That education must necessarily take into account the existing prejudices and resistances. In the words of Dr. CHARLES HILL, it is unfortunate but true that the people are more interested in disease than in health, that they would rather put their faith in a bottle of medicine to cure disease than make the necessary adjustments of life that are necessary to improve health, and that they would prefer to be guided in their approach to health and disease by the grandmothers' tales picked up during childhood than by the scientific knowledge. There is a profound ignorance of the working of the human body and any knowledge of physiology they possess is drawn almost entirely from patent medicine advertisements which introduce the public to such physiological truths as "the acid in the stomach will burn a hole in the carpet" and to the concept of "night-starvation." As a result, the middle-aged are fixed in their habits and encrusted in an almost impermeable shell of folk-lore. In the circumstances concentration on teaching the young the healthy habits and the knowledge that can be for

them the basis of their healthy living are absolutely necessary, if results are to be obtained.

Certain definite principles should be borne in mind in teaching the young. Perhaps the most important and probably the most universally disregarded, is that parents should answer the questions put by their children truthfully and without any signs of embarrassment. The fact that a child asks a question on any matter is a sign that he is not only interested in it but he is also intellectually ready to receive the information for which he asks. If therefore his questions are answered as they arise his health education including his sex education will proceed in a natural manner. Our approach must be the inspiring one of stressing the beauty, grace and joy of a positive attitude to health.

This teaching of the young must be graded to suit their intellectual level. Upto the age of 7 years it is sufficient if we teach the proper habits without explanation, unless it is asked for. In the next four years, there should be a gradual development of factual biologic teaching based upon the natural instincts of the child. This is a period when health teaching can be illustrated and health morals drawn from the lives of the Great. In the next five years it will be advantageous

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to keep human factual biology as the background of health education. Sex education must not be omitted, but there should be no over-emphasis on it. The history of health services may be taught; a visit to the sewage farm is productive of as much good as a visit to the museum.

The most difficult task is the health education of the adult. Grandmothers' tales have to be debunked and faith in the bottle of medicine shaken. Though we may deplore their interest in disease, we must start off our teaching from this interest, teaching physiology under the guise of pathology. Lectures clearly based upon a wise and common-sense philosophy should be arranged and there should be no attempt at exaggeration or undue bias.

The most effective health education is personal health education passed by direct contact. The doctor, the teacher, and the health visitor have a great opportunity here. But they have much to learn themselves under existing conditions, if they are to play their potent part to the full. Radio talk is also another means of approach to the people. A short talk is better

than a long one; the appeal to the hearer should be personal and the language employed simple, straightforward, and unadorned. If the radio talk is to be effective it should be delivered extempore and not read from a manuscript. The talk that is laboriously produced in polished language will not read well on the radio but will seem stiff and stilted, and will make real contact with the audience impossible and the appeal ineffective.

It will thus be clear that to secure the willing co-operation of the people it is necessary to give them sound health education. And if that health education is to be carried out along scientific lines, the needs and the results must be constantly assessed. Only upon these can our health education be based. And finally, we must also measure the relative efficacy of different media and the results of all the work by assessing the changes that have been brought about in health habits, attitudes and opinions. We trust our Minister for Public Health will take due note of these factors and arrange for the proper health education of the people.

FOOD

FOOD sustains life. In order to live a happy and long life, we must study food in all its aspects.

What is our food? Human race is divided into different nationalities on account of their separate and different environments. Some people live in islands, some on mountainous regions, some on seacoasts, some on productive land, some near desert area, some in land of copious rain, and some in land of sufficient rain, and others in barely sufficient rain. All have different climates, and different articles to live upon. Naturally nationalities differ in their food, but not on account of their food.

Some people live mainly on animal diet, some live upon vegetable diet, and some upon mixed diet. So the diet depends upon the availability of eatable articles, and is the chief thing in conferring the character and distinction of every nation. No diet is absolutely specific as standard diet. Pure vegetable diet, though appearing meagre, is as strength-giving as the mixed diet. An ele-

Dr. K. H. PAREKH, M.B., B.S.,

Dhoraji, Kathiawar.

phant that lives mainly on grass is as stout and strong as a tiger or a lion which is carnivorous.

Food by itself is useful only when taken in the right quantity, and at the right hour, and in the right manner.

The quantity of food to be taken is judged by the appetite we have. The physical work and the life processes are a source of wear and tear in the body, and are responsible for creation of appetite. When we try to eat more with the help of condiments, or sweet things, we ingest these things at our own risk. This excess of intake of food is a fruitful source of many diseases like dyspepsia, colic, diabetes, sprue, enteric, appendicitis and many others.

So it is best to eat only what our appetite allows, and to increase our appetite, we should work more.

Digestion of food depends greatly upon the attitude we observe during the process of eating. To concentrate the flow of digestive juices, we should be totally at rest. We should wash our hands, feet and face to relieve congestion on them brought about by work. The posture should be that of relief and all business worry should be kept away when eating.

The food we eat is digested by the juices of the stomach, and in order to keep them fully active, we should not drink water, tea or coffee, as they dilute these juices. It will upset the digestion, and all the advantages of a nutritious diet will be lost on us. It is also better to take minimum water to quench thirst during meals.

One should take bland things first, spiced and appetising food next, and acid things last.

Well digested food generally leaves our stomach after three hours and so we should adjust our meals and breakfasts, so that there is a space of above three hours between each feed.

Sugar, while one of the most useful articles of nutrition during illness, is the great harmful thing for the maintenance of health. Sugar from the food is mainly prepared by the liver, and the sugar taken by the mouth retards the function of the great factory, the liver. The liver, besides preparing sugar, is responsible for the vitamins A, B complex, etc. With the retardation of the function of liver, we suffer from the symptoms of partial or complete avitaminosis, and become prone to many diseases depending upon their presence in the blood.

Tea is one of the greatest vices prevalent now. We see people taking cups of tea in dozens. Those who have brain work, or

those who are in constant anxiety due to speculation, always prefer tea as a stimulating beverage. Thus they suffer by losing the appetite and contracting a wrong habit from which very few can retract, even during illness. The greatest damage is done to the teeth which lose all their work of chewing. Loss of work and presence of sugar are the chief causes of pyorrhea and early caries of the teeth and spongy gums. No amount of medicine can cure these diseases, unless faulty habits are improved.

Cooking and over-cooking are responsible for diminishing the value of food articles. The meagre diet of a poor man, namely wheat or millet bread, a little salt, some pickles and whey, a preparation of milk, contained everything that a human body requires. We see that people with this meagre diet are mostly healthy, and seldom suffered from vitamin deficiency.

In order to make a dish relishing, we boil, fry or ice a thing, and this very thing is liable for destroying the vitamins and other metabolic values of an otherwise complete diet.

Nearly all varieties of diet are rich in life-sustaining elements, but faulty cooking and wrong habits of eating are responsible for their loss to us.

We see that a good many people take ice-cream and cold-beverages during summer, but the fun of all these is that they have their hot tea soon followed by. These are all the evils of scientific investigations primarily meant for relieving suffering humanity.

To bring the article to a close, we can say that simpler the diet, healthier the man. All medicines and all medical help merely mitigate the evils of a wrong diet, and can never give health. So let us say the doctor cares for, medicine relieves and Nature alone cures.

Nuts a Good Substitute for Meat

DIETETIC researches conducted by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg at the Battle Creek Sanitarium for more than half a century showed that nuts are an adequate substitute for meat. Professor H. C. Sherman, one of the world's foremost authorities on food and nutrition, makes the following interesting statement in his admirable textbook, *Food Products*, which fully confirms Dr. Kellogg's work:

"To speak of nuts as 'meat substitute' is natural under present conditions and reflects the prominence which has been given to meat and the casual way in which nuts have been regarded for some generations. Looking at the matter in evolutionary perspective, it might be more logical to speak of meats as 'nut substitute' instead."

Many eminent paleontologists maintain that primitive man lived entirely upon the products of the field and forest, and that nuts formed a large part of his dietary. They also assert that it was only after the Glacial

Period, during which a great ice cap moved across vast areas of the earth's surface and destroyed great forests, including nut trees, that man, because of necessity, resorted to the killing of animals to sustain life.

Nuts, unfortunately, have never been accorded the place in the daily dietary of the American people which their many good qualities merit. Instead of being served as entrees, they usually appear at the end of a sumptuous meal, especially at banquets, when too much food has already been eaten and thorough mastication is neglected. Nuts have on this account acquired the undeserved reputation of being hard to digest. The importance of masticating nuts thoroughly is at once apparent when it is remembered that a small particle of nut meat no larger than the head of a pin may escape digestion and pass through the intestinal tract like a foreign body.

Because of the almost universal neglect to thoroughly masticate nuts, which is really

necessary to enjoy the full benefit of the excellent food elements they supply. Dr. Kellogg devised a method of preparation which overcomes this difficulty. He reduced peanuts to a smooth paste and called the product "Peanut Butter," a wholesome spread for bread which has delighted the palates of millions, especially children. This excellent food was first made for patients of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. It is rich in high quality protein and easily digestible fat.

Animal feeding experiments have shown that the protein of the peanut is equal to that of milk, eggs, and meat. Some African tribes of the Zambezi river region subsist, according to medical missionaries who have practised there for many years, almost entirely upon sweet potato vines and peanuts. Curiously, they discard the tubers, which they regard as not worth eating. The peanuts are boiled, thoroughly macerated and boiled again long enough to produce a thick gravy which is applied liberally to almost all other food they eat. One physician who has practised among these people for more than a decade stated in a public lecture that although he was the only doctor in an area with a population of more than fifty thousand, and many persons called upon him daily for medical attention, he had never seen a case of cancer except among natives from the coast who worked as servants and had been subjected to the harmful effects of civilization.

We are indebted to Dr. Kellogg's inventive genius for two other delectable foods, largely composed of nuts, Protose and Nuttose, which not only take the place of meat from a nutritive standpoint but from a gustatory one as well, because they approximate meat in flavour. During recent years, these two products and many others closely patterned after them have gained at least a small place in the American dietary and their popularity is increasing.

Still another food prepared from nuts which was devised by Dr. Kellogg is Malted Nuts. By the addition of a proper amount of water, it makes a nutritious and very delicious beverage, the composition of which is similar to that of milk. Many infants with whom cow's milk disagreed have been reared on this preparation, the chief ingredient of which is the peanut. Malted nuts has also been found

to be a great boon to nursing mothers, as it use increases the flow of lactal fluid.

"As sweet as a nut" is an old but very true saying. Even the lowly peanut, which is really not a nut but a legume, possesses so much gustatory appeal that it is just about as difficult to eat only a few from a bag and then stop before the last one has been extracted, as it is to pull the lever of a mail box, drop a letter into the opening, release the lever and go about one's business without jiggling it two or three times to make certain that the missive has found its way into the interior of the box.

Nuts possess numerous advantages over meat and even eggs and milk. Kind Mother Nature evidently regards nuts as especially precious foods, because they are nearly all carefully protected by a thick outer wrapper consisting of tough fibrous material and a hard shell, which together form an exceedingly effective barrier against insects and bacteria. Nuts are never a source of trichinosis or tapeworm infestation, nor do they cause food poisoning, which cannot be said of pork or beef. Undulant fever also, which sometimes appears after the use of unpasteurized milk, can never be traced to nuts.

On one occasion when Dr. Kellogg was lecturing to a large audience, a heckler who wanted to embarrass the doctor arose and said he would like to ask a question. He inquired, "Doctor, do you ever prescribe meats of any sort for your patients? If so, what kinds do you recommend?" Dr. Kellogg retorted at once without the slightest hesitation, "Certainly. I frequently prescribe meats—nut meats." This is very good advice.

That the high value of nuts in the dietary is rapidly beginning to be appreciated by the general public is shown by the fact that numerous stores where only nuts are sold have recently appeared in all of our large cities, and even in some comparatively small towns. A few ounces of nuts and a little fruit make an excellent emergency meal.

Nuts should be served at the beginning instead of at the end of a meal. Ounce for ounce, their caloric value is far greater than that of meat or eggs, and even a small quantity will produce a sense of satiety.—*Good Health.*

Convalescence Accelerated

So impressive has been the effect of physical medicine in hastening recovery and habilitation in the armed forces that this method is likely to be increasingly employed in civilian practice. Many doctors and technicians who have been trained in applying this form of treatment will soon be able to offer their services to hospitals. Lieutenant H. N. Gardner, U. S. N., suggests that the system evolved of handling bedridden or crippled patients was more important than the drugs developed in the war period (*Science News Letter*, Vol. 48, p. 298). The Baruch Committee on Physical Medicine is doing much to promote the use of physical therapy, remedial exercise, and occupational

therapy in restoring the function of injured nerves, damaged muscles, and stiffened joints. Where there is no fever and the condition is not serious, treatments may begin in bed, even if the patient at first can only wiggle his fingers and toes. Unexpected results have been achieved in cases of transverse myelitis with paralysis from the waist down. Arm and trunk muscles can be strengthened so that the victim can get around without help. Furthermore, two conditions are prevented which formerly were troublesome. These were formation of bladder and kidney stones and decalcification of the bones of the legs and feet. Patients get well faster because they are less bored and more cheerful.

ON HONEY

K.A. SHAH, M.B., B.S.

(Continued from page 63 of June '46 issue of HEALTH).

Other uses of honey.—Honey has a great place in the religious ceremonies of the Hindus. It is used at the time of worshipping God or Guru. According to the Yajurveda, honey should be used to write the divine syllable "OM" on the new born infant's tongue. According to Watt, "Honey sipping forms part of the marriage ceremony of some castes, and one of the purificatory ceremonies is performed by placing a little honey in the mouth of the newly born male infant." The Masai Youth in East Africa opens negotiations of his marriage by sending a pot of honey to the parents of his future bride.

It is surprising, however, that honey has no place in our kitchen. Watt does mention that "Honey is valued in India as an anti-septic, for the preservation of fruits and for making cakes, sweetmeats, etc., which are required to keep for some length of time." So far as the writer is aware, honey is not used in cookery—at least in Gujarat. In America, on the other hand, honey is extensively used in preparing a variety of dishes like icecream and cakes and jam and bread, and salads and cocktails and beverages.

The Egyptians used honey for preserving their dead and Hooker has reported the prevalence of such a custom in the Khasias of India. The body of Alexander the Great was preserved by these methods.

Grafts, seeds and birds' eggs, for transmission to great distances are sometimes packed in honey. Pills prepared with honey as an excipient are said to remain unindurated however long they may be left.

Honey is also used in the manufacture of cigarettes, chewing tobacco, pipe bowls, golf balls, tooth pastes, shaving creams, and as an anti-freeze mixture in automobile radiators.

Poisonous honey.—The earliest account of honey causing sickness is given by Xenophon. It occurred in 40 B. C. Those of his soldiers who ate of the combs "lost their senses, vomited and were affected with purging, and none of them were able to stand upright. Those who had eaten little were like men intoxicated; those who had eaten much were like mad men, and some like persons at the point of death." No death, however, was recorded and recovery was complete in each case.

Watt informs us, "There seems to be little doubt that certain kinds of honey, or honey collected from certain flowers, is more or less poisonous. Dr. Bidie gives an account of a small quantity of honey, obtained from the jungle of Coorg, having produced symptoms of ulceration, headache, extreme nausea prostration and intense thirst."

Honey gathered from mountain laurel, rhododendron, and yellow jasmine is supposed to be poisonous. C. L. Sams, Extension Agent

of North Calcium reports, "Having faith in the reports from Washington (that no poison was detected in honey) I ate a quantity of it. It caused all the illness claimed for it viz., giddiness, headache and first of all tingling of fingers and toes."

Modern authors are, however, reluctant to believe that there is anything like poisonous honey. Dr. Philips, Professor of Agriculture at Cornell University, writes, "If any plant is ever the source of poisonous honey, this fact should be determined and made known, but the vague rumours now current are valueless. It should be remembered in this connection that certain individuals have idiosyncrasies toward certain foods and this may account for some of the recorded cases of honey poisoning."

The evidence for any honey having poisonous properties is exceedingly doubtful and in all probability the symptoms described by these old writers were due either to overeating, or to sensitivity to osmotic pressure set up by honey in an empty stomach. Later observations do not substantiate these old theories."

Honey-dew.—In the absence of floral nectar, bees gather sugar from any available source, giving preference to those which have attractive odours. Many species of plants are provided with glands which secrete sweet liquids and which are located outside the flowers. Examples of this are found on the leaves of cotton. Various acacias have glands on the stems. This secretion is called honey-dew. The main source of honey-dew, however, is not plant secretion but insect excretion. This honey-dew is a sweet glutinous liquid excreted in large quantities on the foliage of plants by plant lice and scale insects. Usually honeydew is gathered more by ants than bees. But honey bees also gather this at times. It has an inferior flavour and is detrimental to beekeeping. Many beekeepers detest its colour and odour and are always on the watch to avoid it. Honeydew-honey differs from floral honey in that it contains a large amount (12.95%) of dextrin, and is dextro-rotatory.

Lotus honey.—A word might here be said about this fictitious kind of honey, for it is widely advertised in the lay press and even doctors have advised their patients to use it. For many years now, the Editor of the Indian Bee Journal has been carrying out a determined campaign against this fraud which is costing the public so dearly. (One firm offers half a drachm for Re. 1-8-0!) Lotus honey is nothing more nor less than ordinary honey. "Lotus honey" should really mean honey gathered from the lotus flowers only. But we are informed that there is no place in Northern India where the lotus blooms in such abundance, and to the exclusion of all other flowers, as to provide honey

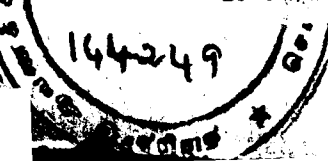
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which could honestly be called "Lotus" honey.

The question then arises, why do people go in for this so-called "Lotus honey"? It is because "Padma Madhu" has been highly recommended in Ayurveda for certain eye diseases. Now according to Muttoo, the word 'Padma' here does not refer to the flower but to the tree, which is the wild cherry tree. This surmise is supported by the fact that the wild cherry blossoms are an extraordinarily good source of honey, and the tree is abundant all over the Himalayan range. It is quite probable that the ancients referred to this variety as "Padma Madhu." If the promoters of so called "Lotus Honey" are offering this to the public, it should be labelled "Wild Cherry Blossom Honey" and should be sold just as other varieties of honey. But even this appears to be doubtful and the ophthalmologists will do better if they just prescribe honey for their patients without qualifying it.

Conclusion.—Our study has shown us that "Honey is an appetizing, nourishing, warming and healing food. It is as good for children as for old people, for it is the most easily digested of any food, in fact the older you are or the younger you are, the better it suits you and the more necessary it is for you....It is the natural sweet. It contains vitality that comes from the kindling and energizing rays of the sun...."

But for this the nation must be made honey-conscious, and the Government be made to wake up from its age-old slumber. Though beekeeping has been practised in the Himalayas and the Punjab and some parts of South India, the honey produced is only 10 per cent. of the potential capacity of India. Whereas bee-keeping gives annually to the U. S. A. about crores of rupees worth of honey, India is actually importing honey, and losing every year crores of rupees' worth of honey crop merely because there are not enough bee-keepers to harvest it through their bees.

It is necessary, therefore, that bee-keeping on modern lines should be extensively promoted as part of the "grow more food campaign." It is a means of producing a valuable food from sources which are at present going waste and are being lost to the nation. Not an extra acre of land need be cultivated. All the flowers are there and nature puts before us, year after year, its present of nectar free of charge for whomsoever may collect it. If it is not collected by bees, it is lost by evaporation by the action of the sun and wind. It is an ideal subsidiary village industry, offering complete security to the worker inasmuch as no capitalist can put the bee-keeper out of work by any machine.

No one need be deterred by the fear of bee-stings. We are assured by the bee-keepers that bees are easy to handle if we are gentle, calm and steady. Even women and children

are known to manipulate bees quite undaunted. The Indian honey-bee, we are further assured, is very docile. And even if the bee-keeper is stung occasionally, we have to remember that bee-venom is good for rheumatic ailments.

Travancore was the first to promote modern bee-keeping in India and to-day there are several centres where training in beekeeping can be had: (1) The Punjab Govt. Bee Farm, Katrain and Nagrota; (2) U. P. Govt. Apiary, Jeolikote; (3) The Govt. Agricultural Farm, Coimbatore; (4) Y. M. C. A. Rural Development Centre, Doddaballapur, Mysore State; (5) Y. M. C. A. Rural Reconstruction Centre, Ramnathapuram, Coimbatore; (6) Y. M. C. A. Rural Reconstruction Centre, Marthandam, Travancore State; (7) Maganwadi Apiary, Wardha; and (8) Ganeshkhind Fruit Experiment Station, Poona.

We must also remember that the production of honey forms only a fraction of the benefit that the land derives from beekeeping. The benefit to agriculture and fruit industry is estimated by experts to be ten times, because bees play an important part in cross pollination. Recognising the value of bees to the country, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Great Britain notified that honey bees are "War Workers"—and the Government of the Punjab have resolved to open a Central Research Station for Bee Culture at Lyallpur.

Moreover, beekeeping has a special appeal to the individual as a hobby. Poets, philosophers, geometers, artists and artisans have gone into raptures over the organization, industry, interior economy and mechanical skill of these little creatures. The honey-bees, "the golden, unsubstantial winged people of the air; light as down borne upon the wind, delicate as a miracle of the goldsmith's art; chaste sippers of dew, clad like the affianced lovers of the flowers, whose wonderful minds are concealed in such small though shapely bodies" have delighted poets like Virgil and Kipling, attracted scientists like Sir Oliver Lodge and wise men like Aristotle and Mæterlinck; and inspired novelists like Conan Doyle and Marie Corelli. The bee-hive contains "an unparalleled activity, an infinite number of wise laws, and a startling amalgam of mystery, experience, genius, calculation, science of various industries, of certitude and prescience, of intelligent habits and curious feelings and virtues." If you are a devout Christian you can invoke the honey bee in support of your belief in the Immaculate Conception; if you are a student of sociology the bee-colony furnishes you with an ideal form of government; if you are a scientist, the honey bee typifies to you the problem of instinct or reason?—to the geneticist it offers a fruitful field for research and her geometrical precision astounds the mathematician. And so the refrain of our theme is—Keep bees, and eat honey.—*Medical Bulletin.*

WHAT TO DO ABOUT INGROWING TOE-NAILS

Dr. W. Schweisheimer.

ONE can hardly imagine a more excruciating pain than that caused by an ingrown toe-nail pressed by the shoe into the nervous tissues of the toe. In most cases the great toe is concerned, but sometimes it is the little toe or other toes.

The cause of this ailment is frequently the wearing of tight and pointed shoes, sometimes also tight hose, which crowd the toes together. A heel that is too high may produce similar trouble because it pushes the forepart of the foot forward and the whole weight of the body rests on it.

In such cases it is a necessary preventive measure to discard such ill-fitting footwear. A proper fitting shoe will prevent the big toe from being pressed unduly and deviated from its normal position.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that cases occur quite frequently where the footwear shows no avoidable feature and where another cause must be looked for. If there is an outward deviation of the great toe—called *Halux valgus*—one of the consequences may be the appearance of an ingrown toe-nail.

Improper cutting of the nails may be a cause. Cutting the nail too short or cutting out the lateral edge of the nail will tend to cause lateral growth of the nail into the sensitive soft tissue. If while cutting the nail a small part of it is allowed to remain along the lateral edge, it will grow as a bayonet or splinter and penetrate into the soft tissue. The hidden position of this edge may prevent the proper trimming of the nail at this spot. Infection of the nail is often combined with the splinter formation.

It is not easy to cut the nail properly at the corners, and some persons make the big mistake of tearing off the corners of the nail. This produces a jagged edge left buried in the flesh, preparing the way for bacterial invasion. Such improper cutting of the nails must be avoided.

The general idea about ingrowing toe-nails is that the nail transgresses its normal boundaries and grows sideways into the soft tissues, injuring the invaded structures and causing pain and inflammation. But actually the cells that produce the growth of the nail are limited to the area within the lunula (little moon) at the base of the nail; and, beyond this, the nail, like hairs, is simply pushed forward by the growing part. Some authors, therefore, prefer to speak of an "impacted" nail rather than of an ingrown nail, when the nail presses too hard against the flesh.

In such cases the nail bed is swollen and reddened. Pain is increased with walking; walking may even be impossible. If one tries to press the nail downward firmly upon the nail bed, the patient may feel severe pain. When the inflammation is advanced there is a yellowish fluid, or pus, between the nail margin and the nail bed. Loitering bacteria, that happen to be in the vicinity of the wound made by the nail in the flesh of the toe, consider the open door a welcome

invitation to enter.

What is the best way to treat an ingrown toe-nail? One thing is obvious: A permanent cure is possible only if sufficiently comfortable footwear is provided. This means wearing broad shoes that have a straight medial margin, and hose long enough to assure freedom from pressure.

In mild cases, the nail edge may be gently raised and padded underneath with lint, or we may introduce a small pledget of cotton wool beneath the nail, so as to raise it from its bed, the end of the nail being cut square. Hauser recommends that this cotton may be covered with collodion which, when dry, will hold it in place. This permits the nail to grow out without pressing into the soft tissue.

This form of treatment puts an end to the continuous irritation of the inflamed spot, and the wound produced may heal again. If this simple treatment is continued with care and patience, the distressing condition can often be completely rectified. If there is much pain and tenderness, the inflammation may be relieved by warm foot baths or camomile baths. Elevation of the foot with applications of hot, moist boric dressings are effective, too.

One thing should never be forgotten. A toe-nail wound of the foot needs the same careful aseptic treatment as do other kinds of wounds; otherwise a dangerous inflammation or even abscess formation may originate from the diseased toe. To prevent any infection the wound beneath the ingrown nail may be painted with tincture of iodine or some similar disinfectant after the foot baths.

In some cases it is helpful to separate the flesh cautiously from the nail, to cut the nail, and to hold the flesh away from the nail by adhesive tape or by a tiny metal plate until healing is effected. It may be necessary to repeat this treatment several times to secure a lasting cure.

If such treatments as have been suggested are not effective, an operation may be necessary. Under general or local anaesthesia, nail and nail bed are partly removed (frequently the half of each).

Where there is a possibility of preserving the nail, cutting out a complete wedge of tissue, including the edge of the nail and the fold of the skin, and extending back to the nail root, gives good results. If, despite care in footwear after the first operation, relapse occurs, and especially if both nail margins are involved in the inflammatory process, complete removal of the nail may prove necessary.

With all the trouble and distress that an ingrown toe-nail is likely to cause, it is surely a matter of great importance to prevent such a condition from developing. If improper shoes are worn because the wearer is ignorant of their probable harmful effects, we may pity him in his distress; but if he wears them merely because of pride or vanity, we must say that whatever pain he may suffer will be no more than he deserves. — *Good Health (Lond).*

Health, July '46]

Topics from Medical and Health Periodicals

Sudden death in the cigarette.—The part which tobacco plays in sudden deaths from coronary thrombosis (clot) has been studied by Dr. W. J. McCormick, of Toronto, Canada, and is related in *L'Union Medicale*, Montreal. He found that of 269 cases of sudden death in three years, 151 had been diagnosed as coronary thrombosis. Other heart diseases accounted for forty-five deaths. It was clear that the coronary thrombosis fatalities were not due to old age, for the average age was fifty-two years. Six died at forty or under. Of the 151, more than one-half were drinkers, while ninety-four per cent of them were smokers. Of the remaining six per cent, some had given up cigarettes shortly before death. In middle age, this disease kills more people than cancer, tuberculosis, and diabetes combined. A generation ago, there were five male victims to one woman. Now the proportion is two to one. It is well known that smoking by women has increased greatly. In the United States, the number of cigarettes used was multiplied nearly two and a half times between 1935 and 1944.

The hot sitz bath.—A very short hot sitz bath (112° to 120°F), is a most excellent means of relieving chronic pelvic pain. Since most homes lack a special tub for a classical sitz bath, such a bath may be taken in an ordinary bath tub by drawing water to the depth of about two inches, at a temperature as hot as can be tolerated, and sitting in the tub with the legs extended, so that the water rises about the buttocks and the hips and thighs and legs. Add more hot water until the temperature is as high as can be tolerated. Remain in this bath not longer than three to five minutes; then rise and immediately follow it by a dash of cold water upon the hips, or rapid cold friction of the parts. This is a most excellent and serviceable analgesic measure, and may be advantageously employed in chronic ovarian and uterine pains, painful affections of the rectum, and chronic inflammation of the prostate.—*Good Health*.

The gum chewing habit.—This is a much debated question. The constant activity of the salivary glands induced by gum chewing, especially when flavored gum is chewed, increases greatly the quantity of saliva produced but lessens its digestive activity, and thus interferes to some extent with the digestion of starch, which is the chief function of the saliva. The habit of chewing tobacco and chewing gum thus calls for excessive activity of the salivary glands, and it may be that this may finally result in harm. Thorough mastication of food is essential to good digestion; but gum chewing is at least a useless, and perhaps sometimes harmful, practice if carried to excess, to say nothing of its unsightliness when practised in public.

Individuals with fast-flowing saliva have much lower calcium and phosphorus fractions than those with slowly flowing saliva. The increase of calcium in activated saliva (such as occurs with gum chewing) is the result of an elective response of the salivary glands to the different flavors of the material chewed. The dental investigations which have been published in the dental professional journals agree that those who chew gum habitually do not have better dental health than those who do not chew gum. The use of gum with vitamin K apparently slightly lessens the occurrence of dental caries, but the use of gum plus sugar favours caries, especially in susceptible persons.—*Good Health*.

Complications from neglect of the teeth.—The American dietary consists largely of foods so soft that they require very little chewing. This may be responsible for many disorders of the teeth and gums, writes Dr. Theodore B. Van Dellen in the *Chicago Tribune* (December 2, 1945). In spite of the stories about savages having perfect teeth although they have never seen a toothbrush, persistent use of this simple appliance is important to civilized man. Should debris be allowed to remain on the surface or in tiny crevices, fermentation may occur and germs get a foothold and thrive. Congestion of the gums is at first patchy in distribution but later becomes widespread. It is then called gingivitis. Its severity depends upon the type of infecting bacteria. Vincent's organism causes trench mouth. In time, thickening of the gums takes place, especially along the free margins. Sometimes mastication becomes painful and usually the breath is foul. Since crooked teeth are not easy to clean, they are most likely to harbour germs. Proper brushing might have prevented all the trouble. Eventually the swollen gums encroach on the enamel.

Smokers had more colds.—Smokers were found to be slightly more susceptible to colds than nonsmokers in a test of sixteen hundred college girls conducted by Dr. W. B. Brown and associates (*Journal of Immunology*, Vol. 50, p. 161.) There was a definite increase in the number of new colds during periods of falling temperature and heavy rains. The students were asked to report as soon as they recognized cold symptoms. Some received a gram of vitamin C immediately and another gram twenty-four hours later. The controls had citric acid, supposing of course that they had the same medication as the others. The vitamin had some apparent effect in reducing the number of those developing colds. Results were better, however, if the vitamin treatment was begun one to seven hours after the presumed onset.

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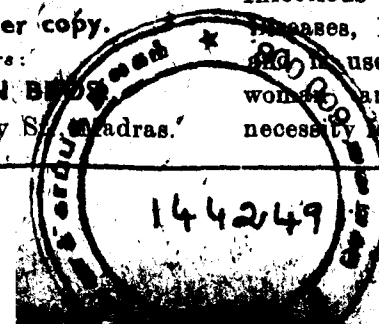
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