

MILK AS A FOOD

MILK is a universal food.

Humans have it, all the mammals have it. We are able to digest it from birth onwards, and it is easily taken even by the very feeble. It would, of course, be silly to suggest that humans could get along for ever on just one type of food, but if we could only have one item on our menu, we should survive longer and in a better state on milk alone than on any other single food item. Babies, of course, do so for a few months before they are able to have anything else, and the only thing they go a bit short of is iron; they have to replenish their store of this, obtained from mother before birth, after they are three to four months old, and they get it, of course, from meat extracts and such things. We also need solid foods to keep our teeth sharp and in good condition; but for sheer concentrated food, milk is the thing.

What does it contain? First of all, protein. I think people sometimes forget about this, and associate protein with red meat. But the protein

in milk is what we call first class protein, and is in two main forms, caseinogen and lactalbumin. There is a protein content of 3.5 gm per cent in good cows' milk, which makes it a valuable source of protein in our diet. These proteins coagulate in the stomach and are then slowly broken down by the gastric juices, which is why it is better to drink slowly, especially cold milk. If you drink it too fast it goes into one big lump, which then takes much longer to digest, whereas if you take it slowly it goes into a lot of smaller lumps and you absorb it quickly.

The fat content of milk is about equal to its protein content. It is higher in cream, obviously; and in fact cream is a very rich food indeed, excellent for the invalid who is building up a bit of resistance, and not at all advisable for the biliously-inclined. Milk fat is one of the more easily digested fats, though, and helps to give energy as the body burns it up.

Milk contains an even

higher proportion of sugar than of either protein or fat—almost five per cent. The sugar is lactose, more easily absorbed than glucose, from which it is originally derived. It also gives energy.

The essential minerals are all present—calcium, potassium, sodium, chloride and phosphorus (surprising how like a chemical formula food becomes when you get to analysing it!), but, as I said before, only very small traces of iron. Calcium is particularly important, as you no doubt know, for the teeth and bones, and is reputed to be good for chilblains. By this I do not mean that taking calcium tablets will make the chilblains you already have, feel better. Local applications are more likely to do that. But if you remember in time next autumn, and drink an extra pint of milk a day, you

will probably find you get through the winter without any chilblains at all—the calcium is preventive rather than curative.

Then, of course, there are the vitamins. You have heard a lot about them in recent years. They are not all present in milk, but the fat-soluble ones are: A, C and D. The different actions of the vitamins would really deserve a separate article on their own, but you know generally that they help us to maintain our fighting forces against infections, and that lack of them in any severe degree usually produces symptoms, either skin-rashes or something of the sort.

So, you see, milk has most things. You know the old saying about an apple a day. A pint of milk is even better.

—FAMILY DOCTOR.

INDIA MAGAZINE

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Rs.	nP.
For One Year	4	0 0
For Six Months	2	0 0
Single Copy	0	3 6

EDITED, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY B. VENKATARAMAN
AT INDIA MAGAZINE PRESS, 460/465, PYCROFTS ROAD, TRIPPLICANE, MADRAS-5.

WANTED

News Agents to Sell

INDIA MAGAZINE

[Leading National English Monthly]

In All Places

Please ask for terms to :

The Manager,
INDIA MAGAZINE,
460/465, Pycrofts Road,
TRIPLICANE, MADRAS—5.

Cover Page Printed At the Asian Printers, Chepauk, Madras-5.

[illegible]