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ABCs of Health

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ABCs of Health

by Ruth Dahlberg

KEEPING up with the vitamins these days is a big assignment.

Vitamins have a great attraction for nutritionists, chemists, and the modern Home Economics student. Recently commercial foods people have realized that they may increase the value of their products by using preparation methods which preserve vitamin content.

Reviewing our vitamin alphabet, we remember that vitamin A has an important function in keeping the skin and mucous membranes of our bodies in a healthy condition. With a lack of vitamin A there is a breakdown of the respiratory tissues and disease germs can enter. Thus a deficiency of vitamin A in our diet may greatly increase our chances of acquiring infectious diseases.

Research has also brought out the possibility that vitamin A may be associated with the special response the blood stream makes when disease organisms enter the body. It is thought that vitamin A may have a function in building up body immunity to disease.

One of the earliest symptoms of vitamin A deficiency is poor vision and poor adjustment of the eyes on entering a dark room. The biophotometer is a new instrument used to measure the degree of dark adaptation. People possessing the greatest sensitivity were those with a high intake of 5,000 to 8,000 international units of vitamin A a day. Concentrates of vitamin A agreeable in taste and odor and minus a vitamin D quantity are now available.

Vitamin A is now used in treating hyperthyroidism as there is an antagonism between thyroxine and vitamin A.

Discoveries concerning the properties of vitamin B have been made. Dr. C. A. Elvehjem of Wisconsin, using dogs, and Dr. T. D. Spies of the Cincinnati General Hospital, studying humans, have found that nicotinic acid which is found in liver extract is directly concerned with prevention of pellagra-like symptoms. Nicotinic acid, a part of vitamin B, has been given to human beings affected with pellagra with resultant rapid improvement in their health. A lack of foods containing nicotinic acid thus seems to be the cause of pellagra. Most pellagrins, how-

ever, have lived on such a limited quantity as well as kind of food that a good diet is necessary to restore them to full health.

In traveling on down the alphabet to vitamin C, it is interesting to note the work that has been done on the vitamin content of tomatoes. Juice canned in glass jars contained only one-half as much vitamin C as juice canned in tin and the juice in tin cans retained proportionally more vitamin C upon being opened and refrigerated than did that juice canned in glass jars. It has recently been discovered that the lower vitamin C content of home canned tomatoes, when compared with commercial products was directly proportional to the unfilled head space in the bottle. Bottles completely filled compared favorably with the commercially canned product.

Whole canned tomatoes have more vitamin C than those which are quartered in the canning process. Straining the tomatoes while hot seems to destroy more vitamin C than straining them after canning while cold.

It is now known that growing pains are not just a part of growing up but are due to a lack of vitamin C. Rheu-



matic fever has been associated with the lack of this vitamin. Tomato juice and orange juice are often cited as rich sources of vitamin C. Remember, however, that it takes three-fourths of a cup of tomato juice to equal in vitamin C content one-half cup of orange juice.

The Chinese people use cabbage water in place of orange as a very rich source of vitamin C. Their babies drink cabbage juice like our babies drink orange



juice. Chinese methods of cooking vegetables in a small amount of fat for a short time conserve vitamin C content.

Both diluted evaporated milk and sterilized whole milk, surprisingly enough, have the same vitamin C content as fresh cows' milk. Infants whose mothers were on a low vitamin C diet had low capillary resistance.

The investigation of diets of those afflicted with dental cavities seems definitely to indicate that in our American situation vitamin D may be the factor lacking. Children with decayed teeth who had diets containing sufficient amounts of milk, eggs, green and leafy vegetables and fruits improved rapidly when vitamin D was added.

It has been known that there was a close association between vitamin D intake and growth in young children. Work has recently been undertaken in which graded amounts of vitamin D were given to children. The results of this experimentation indicate that increasing the amount of vitamin D up to 1 teaspoon fed daily gives corresponding increases in growth. The maximum amount or quantity of vitamin D per day which gave the best growth was 1 teaspoon of codliver oil per day. There is an indication that with a larger daily vitamin D intake growth may be retarded.

Although vitamin D has always been thought important in increasing the absorption of calcium and phosphorus, the latest evidence indicates that this vitamin has little, if any, effect on the absorption of phosphorus by the body, but is indirectly concerned with the absorption of calcium. However, decreased phosphorus absorption may go along with vitamin D deficiencies because a precipitate of calcium phosphate is formed when there is

(Continued on page 19)

degree from Simmons College in 1925. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Upsilon Omicron and Omicron Nu.

MISS OLIVE SETTLES, associate professor in the Textiles and Clothing Department, received a B. S. degree from Columbia University in 1920. She has also attended Central Teachers College, Warrensburg, Missouri, and Santa Barbara Teachers College in California. A member of Delta Phi Delta, Sigma Delta Epsilon and Theta Sigma Phi, Miss Settles is named in *Women's Who's Who*.

Museum study and collecting textiles from various parts of the world are her hobbies. She has exhibited textiles at the University of California.

MISS FLORENCE FALLGATTER, head and professor of Home Economics Education, is the newest member of the Division. She came here this year from Washington, D. C., where she was chief of the Home Economics Education Service of the United States Office of Education for four years.

Having received her bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and a master's at Teachers College, Columbia University, Miss Fallgatter has been a member of the Home Economics Education staff of the University of Minnesota, acting head of the Home Economics Department of Montana State College and regional agent for Home Economics Education before assuming the duties of chief of the Bureau's Home Economics service. She is a member of Phi Mu and Phi Upsilon Omicron and has served as secretary-treasurer and president of the latter organization.

MISS CORA B. MILLER, retired head and professor of the Education Department, believes travel is her chief interest. She attended a meeting of the Home Economics Association of Porto Rico two years ago. During the five-week trip she interviewed Porto Rican teachers on methods of teaching.

Miss Miller, a member of Omicron Nu, Phi Upsilon Omicron and Phi Kappa Phi, introduced Home Economics into the Ft. Dodge public school system before coming to Iowa State in 1916. She was granted a B. S. degree by Beloit College, 1899, a diploma by Bradley Polytechnic Institute, 1909, and an M. A. degree by the University of Chicago in 1924.

GARDENING and dogs are the main interests of Miss Marcia Turner, associate professor of the Education Department. Miss Turner, a member of Omicron Nu, obtained a B. S. degree at Kansas State College in 1917 and an M. A. degree at the University of Chicago in 1919.

Once editor of the Kansas State College Alumnus, she is author of pamphlets written by Miller, Friant and Turner, all colleagues.

THE broader viewpoint of the child in relation to the home instead of

the child as an individual is the topic of most interest to Miss Lydia Swanson, professor and head of Child Development. Miss Swanson obtained her B. S.



Miss Lydia Swanson

degree at the University of Nebraska in 1923 and an M. S. at Iowa State College in 1931. She has also studied at Columbia University and Merrill-Palmer school in Detroit. She is a member of Omicron Nu and Phi Kappa Phi.

Vitamins

(Continued from page 3)

a high calcium content in the intestine. Milk calcium is more easily absorbed and used when vitamin D is present.

We get our vitamin D from two sources and these two sources give us products with somewhat different chemical compositions. Vitamin D is produced by the exposure of vegetable foods to ultra-violet light and is obtained from fish oils. Experimental results seem to show that more of the vegetable vitamin D substance is required to produce the same results that are attained by the vitamin D found in fish oils. Egg yolk is an important source of vitamin D and milk is now being used extensively as a dietary source of this vitamin.

One experimenter has reported that we lose all the benefits of sunbaths and outdoor exercise when we take a shower and rub-down. Why? Because with the shower and rub-down we remove the skin secretions which contain vitamin D materials.

Dr. George R. Cowgill of Yale University makes the statement that our vitamin alphabet shows signs of shrinking because many recent claims of discovery of new vitamins have not been substantiated. Chemists are finding that what appeared to be new vitamins were just undiscovered properties of familiar ones. The fact that the vitamin alphabet is shrinking, however, does not mean that we know all about them, and these so-called protective foods are still necessary for health, vigor and vitality.

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