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Food Affects Morale

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In a reprint from the Journal of the American Dietetics Association for November, 1942, Dr. Lowell Selling relates psychology to nutrition.

**Nutrition** and psychology are very closely related and this relationship can easily be demonstrated. It is within the province of the psychologist to find out, for example, why the homemaker can eat hearty meals when she goes out but cannot enjoy her own cooking. These situations are primarily psychological and differ from the problems of allergy, of food sensitivity or of individual differences of digestion which are primarily physiological in nature.

As a psychiatrist, I have had the opportunity of seeing the reaction of patients in mental hospitals to both poorly prepared and well prepared food. As a criminologist, the importance of careful preparation of food was impressed upon me by the fact that almost all prison riots begin with complaints about food.

Nutrition, to the psychologist, has an important bearing on the mental attitudes and emotional states. Many marriages are wrecked because of poorly prepared and well prepared food. As a criminologist, the importance of careful preparation of food was impressed upon me by the fact that almost all prison riots begin with complaints about food.

Children, too, become problems because of the food situation in the home. Children’s feeding habits have a great deal to do with the emotional adjustments of their parents. A child’s lifelong attitude toward his parents has been known to be warped by having been forced to eat something he did not like.

When advising our domestic relations cases in the clinic about dietary matters, we have before us all the background data. We find that the economic background must be carefully analyzed as it often brings to light incompatibility in dietary interests. A husband or wife, for instance, may demand rich fare to compensate for the economic insecurity of their childhood.

From a psychological standpoint, the diet should be viewed from the following aspects: nutritional quality, quantity, palatability, budget limit, variability, adjustment to individual tastes and economy of time and effort. Not only should a meal satisfy nutritional needs but it should also give a feeling of satiety which contributes to a sense of well-being.