

STORKIE AND CO.

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL, Nutritionist to the Health Department)



A SHORT time ago there cropped up the question of foods for expectant mothers for whom there were pleas for extra butter and cream. This is something of an indicator—of wrong trends in thought. On previous occasions we have set out the food requirements for expectant mothers as: Milk, 1¾ pints (whole or skim); meat, 4-6oz. (with liver or kidney and fish once a week if possible); egg, 1 per day (6 per week obtainable under the rationing allowance); cheese, ½-1oz.; potatoes, a liberal allowance; green vegetables, cauliflower or swedes, ½ cupful cooked measurement; other vegetables, ½ cupful; fruit, 4oz.; butter, 1oz.; bread, wholemeal or germ, 4oz.; wheat germ, 2 tablespoons, or peas or beans, a serving, or peanuts, 1 oz.; oatmeal, 1½ oz.; flour, 1oz.; rose hip syrup, 1-2 tablespoons, or equivalent source of vitamin C such as orange, lemon, grapefruit, black currants, Chinese gooseberries, or tomatoes; sugar, 1½oz.; and a source of vitamin D such as the concentrated fish-liver oils now obtainable in New Zealand (or sunshine as an alternative); iodised salt, or, if the doctor suggests a low salt intake, use 2 teaspoons of seameal per day instead.

In modern times it is thought better not to have the fat content of the dietary too high. Modern trends are also in favour of a higher protein content than formerly. All are agreed that the calcium or lime content should be high. When we look into the allowances that are available to expectant mothers in New Zealand, we find that there is no restriction on milk supplies—unless local factors have operated for a brief period of lowered production. The amount of milk (whole or skim) recommended by authorities—a litre, or an American quart, or 1¾ imperial pints—supplies a large contribution of butterfat, for it contains well over an ounce of fat—rather more than our present ration allowance of butter; indeed, the advice is often given that if the full-cream milk is not well tolerated, or is causing too great an increase in weight, it is better to take skim milk instead. The skim milk in this quantity supplies: almost all of the calcium that is so necessary at this time, about a quarter of her thiamin (vitamin B1) requirements, and two-thirds of the quantity of riboflavin that she needs.

What would she gain by doubling the present allowance of butter? More weight, probably a greater tendency, not unknown at this period, to the formation of gallstones; about 6 per cent of her day's requirements of vitamin D; a valuable amount of vitamin A, which could, however, be supplied by ½ cupful of carrots or green vegetables, or by a few drops of a concentrated fish-liver oil.

When Storkie and Co. have actually landed, the same or even greater emphasis is put on the need for foods that contain protein, calcium, iron, and vitamins, especially the vitamins of the B group. Milk is again placed foremost in the dietary for the nursing mother.



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