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## MILK v. ICE CREAM

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



SOMETIMES it is contended that ice-cream would be more eagerly consumed by school-children than the half-pint of milk which they receive at school. True enough, but we need to know the comparative food value of the two food-stuffs; and the taxpayer would also want to know the comparative cost.

First, a word about the composition and the method of making ice-cream. The minimum fat content demanded by the New Zealand food and drugs regulations has in the past been 8 to 8.5 per cent; the recent amended regulations will put the minimum fat content at 10 per cent. We shall meantime assume that fat comprises 8 per cent. of the total.

Cane sugar varies from 14 to 20 per cent; milk sugar is usually under 6 per cent. A stabiliser such as gelatine, or pectin, or egg albumin, or alginic acid, is present to the extent of less than 1 per cent.

The mixture needs to be pasteurised to kill bacteria; it is then homogenised at 140-150 deg. F., cooled to at least 40 deg. F., and then frozen; a beater incorporates in it a large volume of air.

A threepenny ice-cream contains about 2oz. of ice-cream and one-tenth of an ounce of cone. Let us compare its food value with that of threepence worth of milk.

MILK	ICE-CREAM
1 pint (at 3d)	2oz. (at 3d)
Calories - - - - 392	110
Protein, grams - - - 20	3
Fat, grams - - - - 22	5

Carbohydrate, grams -	28	14
Calcium, milligrams -	671	45
Phosphorus, milligrams -	528	34
Iron, milligrams - -	0.28	0.03
Vitamin A, units -	965	185
Vitamin B1, milligrams -	0.23	0.02
Riboflavin, milligrams -	1.02	0.15
Nicotinic acid, milligrams -	0.63	0.062
Vitamin C, milligrams -	6 to 12	-

The value of milk for school-children lies largely in its protein, calcium and vitamin value. On these points the score is heavily in favour of milk.

Those points which favour the attractiveness of ice-cream are its sugar and its fat. If you look at the pictures and graphs of animals reared on bread and cream compared with those reared on bread and skimmed milk (see *Good Nutrition*, pages 33 and 34), you will conclude that the latter is a better food for growth.

Moreover, we need to keep in mind that 300 years ago sugar was unknown as an article of diet. To quote Dr. Cruickshank, author of *Food and Nutrition* (1946): "Like alcohol, tobacco, morphine and cocaine, sugar has its addicts. . . . The craving for sugar has led to the use of unbalanced diets, for sugar in excess destroys the appetite for those foods which supply the all-essential proteins, vitamins and mineral salts."

While we would not wish to eliminate all gustatory joys from the child's experiences, we need to exercise caution in encouraging what an authority on nutrition describes as an "addiction"; and we could not give our approval to daily ice-cream for school-children in place of milk.

