

FOOD FOR EXPECTANT AND NURSING MOTHERS

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

THE expectant and the nursing mother must be regarded as a class apart from the general adult population, for her needs are in emphatic contrast to those of the general population. If the dietary of a people falls short in any particulars, or is in any way unbalanced, its deficiencies are apt to be dangerous when maternity supervenes. For 18 months, the new life which she is supporting acts virtually in a parasitic manner, robbing her of her stores of protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins.

Latterly, the needs of the expectant and the nursing mother have been more accurately defined than heretofore. Even if the drain of one pregnancy is not noticeable, deterioration in health may supervene after repeated pregnancies. The anaemia in pregnancy is one evidence of the drain made by the growing organism. Too often, women at ante-natal clinics state almost with a touch of pride and certainly with no realisation of its avoidability, that they have "always been pale." Iron-containing foods are required all the time, even between pregnancies, to replenish the stores of iron taken by the growing baby.

Building Up Reserves

It may even be necessary for the physician to prescribe iron medicines. Ample protein foods are necessary to build up the reserve of protein, which is apparently necessary to start off, as well as keep up, the milk supply. Vitamin B1 is essential in greater quantities — for preventing the neuritis of pregnancy and for initiating and maintaining the supply of milk. Thus we find an authority in a recent medical article saying, "There has been insufficient insistence on the total substitution of whole grain bread for white bread." Vitamin C is demanded for the proper formation of teeth. To supply her with enough lime, the average woman should take 1¾ pints of milk a day. To quote the League

of Nations Committee on Nutrition, "the suspicion is justified that the level of calcium and phosphorous intake may be of greater primary importance in dental calcification than in the formation of bone"; one asks, therefore, whether our notoriously low average intake of milk and our sub-optimal use of citrus

fruits (for Vitamin C), and the neglect to take cod liver oil, have been responsible for the degree of dental imperfection obvious in this country.

Dietary Requirements

We may summarise her dietary requirements as being: — Milk, 1¾ pints (even more may be required during the nursing period), eggs, at least 1 daily; fish, once a week; liver, once a week; lean meat (about ¼lb.) the other five days; cheese, 1oz. daily; butter, a little each day. Avoid too much fat. Fruits and vegetables—ideal amounts are: Raw, one orange or one New Zealand grapefruit; 2 medium tomatoes, one apple or banana, one serving of raw vegetable salad. Cooked, plenty of green vege-

tables; potatoes and carrots are valuable; one apple or other fruit. Bread and cereals—wholemeal grain or germ bread. Wheat germ—a tablespoon sprinkled on porridge or fruit. Cod liver oil, 1 to 2 teaspoons daily (or sun-bathing as an alternative). Iodised salt in cooking as well as for the table. And, of course, it is essential to go regularly to the doctor or the ante-natal clinic, especially towards the end of the term. Avoid getting fat. During pregnancy, quality of food rather than quantity is emphasised. During the nursing period, quality is again necessary, but increased quantities are also required.

(Next week: "Fatigue and Overtime Work," by Dr. H. B. Turbott.)

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PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE

STATEMENT FOR SEPTEMBER, 1941

Estates of a value of £462,927 were reported and accepted for administration by the Public Trustee during the month of September, 1941. The total value of the estates and funds under administration by the Public Trustee on March 31, 1941, was £64,436,092, and the new business for the six months ended September 30 was £2,945,012.

Grants of administration made by the Court in favour of the Public Trustee numbered 200 for the month.

During the month 839 new wills appointing the Public Trustee executor were prepared on behalf of testators and lodged for safe custody, and 403 existing wills were revised to provide for changes desired by testators. The total number of wills now held in the Public Trust Office on behalf of living persons is 108,651.