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## Advice on Health (No. 68)

### SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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

**A** NUMBER of questions which have been asked in letters from readers of *The Listener* may also have occurred to other readers. The replies to some of these questions are herewith given.

**Question 1:** "I have a baby 10 months old. What quantity of vitamin C does he need daily?"

**Answer:** Food enough to contain 20 milligrams of vitamin C should be provided, according to current opinion. Two tablespoons of vegetable puree will provide about 5 milligrams, if made with green vegetable and potato and if served as soon as cooked. Two tablespoons of orange juice will supply 15 milligrams. As an alternative to orange juice, or lemon or grapefruit juice the same amount of vitamin C will be furnished by two teaspoons of rose hip syrup, or one tablespoon of black currant puree, or four tablespoons of cooked or raw tomato juice, or four tablespoons of the water from cooked green vegetables or swedes, if the following directions are followed:—Put a cupful of shredded green vegetable or cauliflower or swede (cut finely) into half a cupful of boiling water in a small aluminium or enamel saucepan, bring rapidly to the boil, then turn the flame low and cook for fifteen minutes. Squeeze as much liquid out of the vegetable as possible. This liquid

will have the same value as tomato juice in terms of vitamin C, and is tolerated by the great majority of babies, as has been found by testing it out in one of the Karitane hospitals.

You will read that in England at present, they are satisfied with less than the above amounts; their concern, with their shipping difficulties, is merely to prevent scurvy. Our aim is to attain optimum health. There are also authorities who advocate as much as 50 milligrams per day; such authorities use greater amounts of vegetable and as much as three ounces of orange juice a day. Shall we suggest that the 20 milligrams be a basic allowance, and that as much more be given as you can afford or as the baby can tolerate. Remember that the baby will tolerate a mixture of the above sources of vitamin C more readily than he will tolerate a large amount of one of them.

#### Buttermilk And Cream

**Question 2:** "Why has buttermilk virtues not possessed by cream, when buttermilk is made from cream?"

**Answer:** The value of a food must be studied in relation to the other foods eaten. In some countries the virtues of cream would be extolled because of the presence in it of vitamin A in its butterfat. Here in New Zealand where we eat more butter per head than in any other

part of the world, we are more concerned with emphasising the need for calcium, in which our dietary, tends to be deficient. Thus we praise the virtues of milk, skim milk, powdered milks, buttermilk. Half a pint of buttermilk will provide 300 milligrams of calcium. But you would feel sick, I think, if you took half a pint of cream! The high fat content of the cream would prevent you from taking as much as that—it would depress the activity of your gastric juice, give you indigestion, and satisfy your need for calories to such an extent that you would not be able to eat any of the other foods that go to make up the desirable mixed diet. The circumstance that an average New Zealander might feel sick if he took a glass of buttermilk is merely the result of his training—he is unaccustomed to the taste. In most European and Asiatic countries, soured milk is appreciated; for example, as a dessert, sprinkled with ginger and sugar, or as a cream cheese. There are considered to be some benefits conferred by the lactic acid bacteria, as antagonists to some of the harmful bacteria in the intestine. This reminds one of the vogue there was for "Bulgarian bug" about two decades ago.

(Next week: "Between the Toes—A Danger Zone," by Dr. Turbott.)

### The Basic Dress

**A**N ultra-fashionable style is to be avoided, as it also makes a garment conspicuous—and our basic dress should never be that. What it should do is to give us the most pleasing silhouette possible, and be cut on lines that emphasise the good points of our figures and draw attention away from their worst features.

For greatest usefulness a dress buttoning up the front and with a high neck is the best, for this, worn with a scarf tied cravat-fashion, gives a good style for street wear. With the top buttons opened and the front folded back it gives a V-neck which can be worn with a variety of collars—some dressy and fluffy, for evening wear, some smartly tailored for heat house-dress effects. The skirt should be neither too wide, nor too tight. Pleats, especially the narrower type, are suitable for all purposes though they do make more work when it comes to laundering. A gored skirt, with a moderate flare, is perhaps the most useful type of skirt—as it is roomy enough to permit of activities of all kinds, plain enough to give a smart tailored effect, and yet not so tailored as to be too severe for dressy or indoor wear. The waistline should be where it is most becoming to the wearer; and again the back may be bloused over a belt or left straight, and the front plain or given fullness to suit the particular figure. The type of sleeve should be the one that suits the arm and figure, and gives the best silhouette

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