

TODDLERS' TEETH

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health Department)

DURING last year, one of our medical officers in one of our cities was struck by the number of toddlers who had decayed teeth. Her interest being aroused, she carefully analysed the facts in 140 cases following a thorough inquiry. There shouldn't be decay in toddlers' and pre-school children's mouths. All the little first teeth should be filled if there are holes, and left there as long as possible—until they are pushed out of the way by the erupting second teeth. This is imperative to keep the jaws rounded, with plenty of space for the second set. Of course, if the diet is properly balanced from before birth, and the teeth are kept clean and given enough hard chewing to keep healthily growing jaws, there shouldn't be much decay in toddlers' teeth.

What was the situation in the 140 cases investigated? The number with dental decay was as follows:

Age	No. of children	No. with caries	Percentage
2-3 years	21	5	24
3-4 years	61	32	52
4-5 years	58	43	74
Total	140	80	57

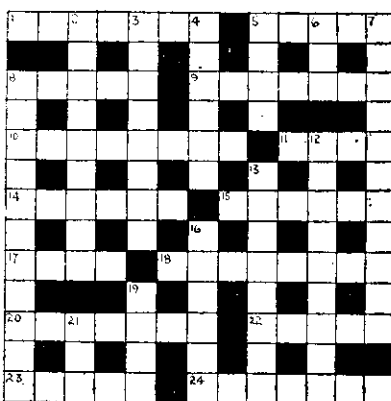
The doctor, in checking up the home facts, found that those children in the group who had less than one pint of milk daily had a higher percentage of decay. The length of time a child was breast-fed or bottle-fed didn't seem to have any influence on the condition of the child's teeth. But there was no doubt about the fact that the children who had insufficient vegetables had less sound teeth than those who had adequate greens and roots. It was noticeable that those mothers who saw that their children had extra Vitamin D in some form (cod liver oil, halibut oil, etc.), over the winter at least, reaped results in reduced caries in the teeth. Alternatively, those mothers who allowed the little ones to run freely to the cake tins or lolly bags, or who always bought them sweets when out, did not have the record of sound teeth that stricter mothers achieved. There was a definite influence towards good teeth in the children where the mothers had taken calcium in some form, chiefly as extra milk, during the pregnancy.

The general average of dental decay in the group was 57 per cent. But when the well-nourished or excellent nutrition children were separated—and there were 35 really bonny specimens—22 of these had perfect teeth, and 13 only, or 37 per cent showed caries. There is, then, a relationship between good development and sound teeth—a well-balanced diet from the start of life means for the majority of the lucky recipients a bonny body, and well-shaped jaws with strong, sound teeth.

These facts seem to stand out: to be under the proper daily consumption of

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

(No. 119: Constructed by R.W.C.)



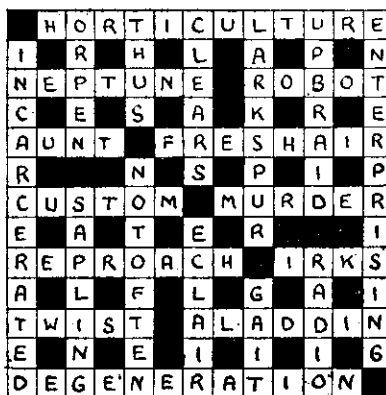
Clues Across

- Sit and clap for a form of Art.
- All are said to lead to Rome.
- Go mad about an article of faith.
- Toff ran into an insult.

Clues Down

- Sum total.
- Can start to do business.
- Nautical form of starch.
- Fire may be prevalent.
- Commotion
- This could be so tiring. Tom!
- Pat's iced tea is upset here.
- If you have this, of course you can endure.
- Best maid for lean years (2 words).
- Cold
- Prejudice familiar to bowlers.
- Ventilate.

(Answer to No. 118.)



milk in children is to invite dental decay in their teeth from calcium shortage. In fact, unless mother begins before baby is born and has extra milk during pregnancy, or, if she can't take milk as extra calcium—unless such early start be made, the toddler's teeth will break down earlier. Vitamin D as cod or halibut liver oil, helps the body to utilise this calcium properly. And more calcium and other needed minerals come from those costly vegetables! Sweets and cakes don't seem at all helpful in keeping good teeth. And finally, it obviously pays to feed right, for dividends accrue in sound teeth in bonny bodies.



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