

A PAIN IN THE NECK

IN 1887, the physician of Middlesex Hospital, London, knowing nothing of bacteriology, wrote in his textbook on skin diseases: "The cause of boils cannot be determined. Their production is promoted by anything that tends to lower the system. Amongst the most common causes must be mentioned an unsuitable diet. In hydropathic establishments the sudden cessation of the use of alcoholic stimulants by those accustomed to them not infrequently produces boils."

Nowadays we know that boils are caused by germs that may normally be on our skin without doing harm. The particular germ usually involved is the staphylococcus. From time to time this fellow gets into a hair follicle or more rarely into a sweat gland in the skin. What keeps him out; what occasionally lets him in? The unbroken skin and the secretions of skin glands are respectively the barrier to, and deterrent from, entry. Something has to spoil these protectors to enable a boil to happen. Our old-time textbook writer had tumbled to this when he listed lowering of the system, wrong eating, and taking the waters as being mixed up with boils. The only way he could explain boils and bath-

This is the text of a talk on health, broadcast recently from ZB, YA and YZ stations of the NZBS by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Deputy-Director-General of Health

houses was to implicate alcohol. A regime of dieting always went with taking the waters that involved consuming less alcohol and he wrongly argued that here was the cause. His observation was acute, if his deductions were faulty.

He was right on the ball! Your resistance has to be lowered and something has to reduce the efficacy of the skin barrier. General fitness can be low, if you have been eating wrongly and not having an all-round mixed diet. Boils do occur more often when you are having too high a proportion of sugars and flours and not eating a balanced grouping of foodstuffs. General fitness can be low when you are for any reason under stress, mental or emotional. Boils happen in some people at such a time, the psychological strain lowering the body resistance.

The efficacy of the skin barrier is lowered by any occupation that soaks



or wets the skin unduly. Sea-going folk are prone to boils, especially where oil-skins rub at neck and wrists. Industrial workers often get boils where greases or oils or alkalis interfere with the skin surface through daily contact. The resistance of the skin is lowered by any continuous friction. Men often get boils where the collar rubs the neck. Sedentary workers may get them on the buttocks. If you have a habit of scratching anywhere, that's where a boil may start. The unbroken skin is too tough a barrier for staphylococci causing boils unless the body resistance is lowered by things such as an ill-balanced highly carbohydrate diet, or emotional and mental

strain, or the local skin resistance is undermined by friction, continual moisture or undue greasiness.

If this is the story of boils it is obvious that when smitten with one or with recurrent boils you have to tone up the body generally. It's a good idea to ask your doctor to have a search for any source of self-infection and lowered resistance, such as infected sinuses or tonsils, and your dentist to make sure there are no root abscesses or gum infections. If you are in a period of stress, there's nothing for it but to break away and relax as the quickest means of recovering poise and getting on top of recurrent boils that have a habit of turning up when the strain is heavy. If your work is of such a nature that grease or alkalis or other skin irritants play a part in encouraging boils, you have to be meticulously careful in soap and water cleanliness each day. As to your diet, revise it so that carbohydrates—the sugary and floury foods—are reduced and you are eating more fruit and dried fruits and vegetables of all kinds and vitamin B foods, such as wholegrain cereals, liver, milk and yeast extracts.

This talk is an endeavour to make boil sufferers turn their thoughts away from the actual treatment of a boil, which your doctor may do through local applications or antibiotics to the hidden implications. Look into your eating, for hidden infection, or stress and strain, or into your type of work, and see whether you can't get rid of a tendency to boils.

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Method:
Soak gelatine in a little cold water, then add balance of water hot to thoroughly dissolve. Mix thoroughly Highlander Sweetened Condensed Milk, Nestle's Cream and Essence. Pour dissolved gelatine into mixture. Stir well. Pour into freezing pan. Place in refrigerator.

After mixture has frozen to consistency of thick custard, remove from refrigerator. Scrape mixture from sides and bottom of pan. Beat with egg-beater for half a minute. Smooth out and replace in refrigerator until frozen for serving.

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