

Choosing Foodstuffs Wisely

IN England about 85 per cent of the nation's food is bought for household use. The New Zealand percentage may be about the same. The housewife buys a portion ready cooked, some partly cooked or preserved, and the bulk uncooked. All of it is selected by her, handled and stored by her, prepared or cooked by her. On the housewife's shoulders lies the burden of the nation's nutrition. No one can say that she does badly in our country. We are, on the whole, a healthy well-nourished people—in spite of our silly overuse of medicines, and the non-recognition of the fact that when things go wrong, it is probably because we've been eating wrongly and living unwisely. If eating wrongly can lead to ill-health—and it can—then the housewife's choice, storage, and cooking of foodstuffs is all-important, for all of these skills affect the nutrition worth of the food eaten in the home. Let us see if you are missing any tips about these skills.

What about the choice of foodstuffs? Your wise selection gives the family an adequately balanced diet. Prices are no help in this. Cheaper things may be nutritious. Take a stew—the tougher, cheaper cuts of meat are made just as tender by the wet cooking method as expensive cuts, and the end result is equal for nutrition. I have the requirements for the daily balanced diet in my head, the quantities and foods needed, but it took me an effort, once, to get it and keep it there. The housewife is too busy and often too tired to make this scientific approach, and wants an easy way to balance the diet without hurting her household budget.

Well, there is an easy way to select foods for health. Put foods under three headings: protective foods, body builders, energy givers. The protectives are easy—fruit, fresh vegetables, dairy foods, oatmeal. The body builders are meat, fish, milk, cheese, eggs, peas, beans and lentils. The energy givers are cereals and bread, potatoes and root vegetables, oily fish, and fats. Dairy foods are in all three groups. Milk, cheese, butter and eggs are protective; milk, cheese and eggs are body builders—but not butter; butter ranks high in the energy givers because it is mainly fat. It always puzzles me why eggs are

This is the text of a talk—the first of three on "Health from the Kitchen"—broadcast recently from ZB, YA and YZ Stations of the NZBS by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Deputy-Director-General of Health

classed with dairy products, but they are. Obviously this quartet—milk, cheese, eggs, butter—that weaves in and out of all three food groups, must be a first thought in your household buying.

The protective group choosing is automatic for dairy products and oatmeal, but calls for care with fruits and vegetables. The citrus and small fruits are richest in protectives, and tomatoes or tree tomatoes can be used as substitutes. Buy good quality vegetables. The cheaper lines are usually stale and bruised, and will have lost much vitamin C. So go for crisp looking, bright coloured vegetables, with leaves tightly packed—not loose and wilted. The stalk of roots should be fresh looking and not brown. Green vegetables should be bought daily, for the longer they are out of the ground, the less the Vitamin C content. It is really best to grow your own if you have any plot at all. Root vegetables—carrots, turnips, swedes, parsnips—don't lose their vitamins so easily, can therefore be bought in a quantity or weekly, but please don't start off by buying shrivelled ones.

Meat is expensive, so choose wisely. It should be bright. If it is clear red it is probably tougher than other cuts and suited to wet cooking, where the water will soften the connective tissue and make it tender. Tenderness in meat can be judged by mottling, where fat cells mingle with the meat fibres, and such meat does well roasted, grilled, or fried. Remember this tip about choosing meat, and that you can make tougher cuts tender by wet cooking, and save your purse. All offal should be, not flabby, but firm, and smell fresh. The same holds for fish.

Remember the three groups! Protectives: fruit, vegetables, dairy foods, oatmeal. Body builders: meat, fish, cheese, eggs, peas, beans, lentils. Energy givers: cereals, root vegetables, oily fish. Select foods from each group every day, especially from body builders for children, and you have an easy key to the balanced diet.



Sonnet Sequence

"THE Provençal and Italian poets of the middle ages delighted in inventing a thousand poetic forms . . . but only a few of these forms are still written today. Only one still lives in its own right as a vital and breathing form capable of endless variation and intimate personal development: the 'little sound' or 'Sonnetto' which still echoes down the long corridors of poetry." Thus does Professor Sydney Musgrove (left), Professor of English at Auckland University College, introduce two talks on the sonnet to be heard from 2YC at 7.30 p.m. on April 16 and 23, and later from other YC stations. The talks will be illustrated by examples of the sonnet from Dante and Shakespeare, down to moderns like the American Merrill Moore (who has more than 100,000 sonnets in his "sonnetarium") and New Zealand poets like R. A. K. Mason, Allen Curnow and James K. Baxter.

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