

Nutrition Wisdom for Old Age

EVERYBODY knows how common it is for old people, from the slightest of trips or falls, to break a limb, and also how the slightest knocks lead to large abrasions or breaks in the skin. These annoying things spring from anatomical changes due to ageing. The bones become more porous, the skin thinner, as the years creep up on us, and it is much harder to keep the cold at bay. What can be done to mitigate such changes?

Modern nutrition thinks it has at least part of the answer. Take this question of the bones becoming more porous and therefore less able to bear weight and sudden stresses! One reason for this is in our internal secretions or hormones, which get out of tune with one another as we age, as our women-folk will know. Lime is not deposited in bones sufficiently, and some may even be abstracted from the bones to make up for a general lack in the body. Nutritionists are inclined to think that you keep your hormones working harmoniously, as they need to do for our food to be digested and incorporated properly in the various types of tissues, right into old age provided you have been eating a balanced diet through all ages, and continue this practice in old age.

Now this is just what many old people fail to do. They imagine they can do without meat, and are sparing with eggs and cheese and milk. Their diet is often very low in protein. Right here is the second reason for thinning bones and easily damaged skins. If protein is low at any stage in life, there is trouble. In old age it pays off in easily broken bones.

Milk is in that protein starvation story because it is a ready source of that body and bone builder. But shortage of milk has another bearing because of its effect on the calcium or lime content of the bones, and so becomes the third reason for readily breakable bones. Obviously, if you want a body well endowed with good sturdy and long bones, you must see that the body gets the proper quota of milk from the earliest days while the bones are growing. Equally obviously, if you want to keep those bones strong through all the working years, the daily desirable milk ration must be somewhere in the menu. Keeping the milk up ensures a good supply of both protein and calcium. It should be clear now that in old age we must keep at our balanced



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

diet, and at our daily milk, if we want to hold back the thinning of our bones and reduce the liability to fractures.

Milk threads itself through all our life nutrition story. Listen while I try to weave in menu form, not Shakespeare's seven, but 11 ages of man! (1) Infant ages: milk. (2) Baby days: milk and porridge. (3) Toddler times: milk, porridge, eggs and vegetables. (4) Schooldays: porridge, bread and butter, green apples and all-day suckers. (5) Teenagers: Milk shakes, and pie with peas and potatoes, or hot dog and chips. (6) Virile adults: steak and egg, potato chips, apple pie, and coffee. (7) Middle ages: soup, roast chicken, fruit salad, ice cream and coffee. (8) Years of accomplishment: caviare, weiner schnitzel, potatoes lyonnaise, asparagus au beurre, green cheese, black coffee. (9) Years of decline: two soft boiled eggs, toast and milk. (10) Old age: crackers and milk. (11) Very old age: milk.

This light-natured survey has therein much truth. We begin with milk; we are inclined to drop it for other things through life until failing body machinery forces us back to it in the end. But we pay for this neglect. Coming back to it belatedly may be too late to prevent thinning of bones and other troubles of old age. Bedsores and skin troubles, particularly pruritis (an itchy dry skin) and eczema, may be prevented by a proper protein intake. Those abrasions of the thinning skin will heal quicker, too, if old folks have normal amounts of meat, fish, eggs, cheese and milk.

Old folks, for many reasons, tend to live on cereals more than on protein foods. They like their bread and butter, and it is easy to get. They don't feel the need for the body builders and they are more bother to prepare. But they do need them in spite of their feelings. Every day old people should have in their eating, one pint of milk; three or four eggs a week; cheese, if they like it, a little every day; and every day a small helping of meat, or fish or liver. And don't ever forget that milk.

EVENING, WORSE BAY

ONLY thought is uncertain
For the mind owns no territory.
And we can silence its story,
Lower a scenic curtain.
Lonely, we make our land
A safe place to stand.

But even landscapes can betray.
When sky and sea hold the light
And the hills have gone dark into night,
In the silent, waiting time of day,
Behind the blank bar of land
Ultimate space, triumphant, stands.

—Jocelyn Henrici



Milk

KEEPS YOU TRIM

Just as vital for adults

as*for children. Drink milk and feel
fitter, look better than
ever before.

10.21