

BURNING THE CANDLE AT BOTH ENDS

Causes of Blood Pressure

(By D. W. Adamson, Wellington).

IN a discussion of the above subject last week I outlined in a general way the more important causes of high blood pressure and some of the rational methods of treatment for those causes in which hardening of the arteries is responsible.

This week I intend to deal with the remaining features, to wit, hyper-activity of the adrenal glands, and congestion of such organs as the liver. Should a highly vascular organ as the liver, for instance, become congested, the reaction on the blood pressure is similar, in at least one respect, to that of hardening of the arteries, inasmuch as the resistance to the blood flow is greatly increased. When we consider that the liver has to handle all the fats, starches and proteins which pass through the stages of digestion besides the toxic and other waste products of the processes of metabolism, it is not difficult to understand that this much abused organ is apt to suffer from over-work and "lie down on its job." The liver becomes congested and the increased resistance to the blood flow means a higher blood pressure.

The adrenal glands are little glands situated on the border of the kidneys. Their activity is responsible for the behaviour of many of our internal functions as well as being responsible for some of our outward characteristics. For instance, lowered activity is associated with sluggishness and inactivity in general. On the other hand the hyper-activity of the glands has reactions ranging from excessive activity of many of the internal processes of which high blood pressure is one, to excitability and feats of explosive energy and temper.

The blood pressure may not be continuously high but rise suddenly in response to anger or excitement which as is well known, causes a greater secretion of the adrenal fluid and greater activity of all the functions influenced by it. This type of condition is not considered unduly serious but there are cases in which a chronic hyperactivity of the glands exists and in which the pressure remains high. For instance, a person may be living under conditions of great pressure or excitement either in business or in "going the pace." No apparent strain may be noticed for some time, but ultimately he wakes up to the fact that his pressure is high, a condition brought about by the reaction on the adrenal activity of the long continued strain of business or other activities.

Everyone who burns the candle at both ends, or who lives under conditions which impose unnecessary strain upon his nervous system, runs the risk of developing high blood pressure.

Fresh fruit and vegetables (both cooked and raw) should preponderate in the diet, particularly such fruits as peaches, pears, oranges, and vegetables such as tomatoes, celery, lettuce and other greens. Meat and all other proteins should be reduced to one's minimum requirement as well as starches and sugars. Water should be taken freely between meals.



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