

To them, nothing was of greater moment, even the business of their own kingdoms paled into insignificance against the importance of this momentous event.

Perhaps if we allowed ourselves more peace, more rest and more solitude we might see things differently and more clearly, and we could put first things first—more naturally. Unknown to us, perhaps our Patients and Staffs may prefer more peace and quiet than we—in our mistaken kindness—are planning to give them? It is good to have parties and social gatherings—and it is also good to rest and be quiet. These are just thoughts, yet one wonders!

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THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING sends out greetings of affection to all its readers at Home and Abroad for a most Happy and Peaceful Christmas-time, and for all success and good things in the year to come.

G. M. H.

## Vitamins in Winter.

By A. E. Hopkins.

IN WINTER, THE LEAST SUNNY SEASON of our year, the importance of vitamins must receive serious consideration.

These vital elements make all the difference to health at all times, but when it is cold, wet, foggy, dull and dark they become a necessity.

Vitamins are elements quite different and far apart from the usual proteins, carbohydrates and fats, but without them these body-building, energy and warmth producing ingredients are of no value to the human body.

It is the vitamin element which enables the body functions to transform the intrinsic values of good food into bones, muscles, nerves, teeth, etc.

The vitamins provide the skilled labour which produces the human body requirements, in balanced form. They supervise digestive processes, health defences, eliminating departments and our general well-being at all times.

The one and only source of these vital life elements is the Sun.

As all our good food comes from the earth through the channels of plant growths, it is not too difficult to understand that the effects of the rays of the Sun on plants will be transmitted to the human body when the plant food is consumed. Vitamins are simply concentrated sunshine and in Winter are absolutely necessary to preserve health.

Everyone knows the familiar A, B, C, D and E vitamins.

Let us briefly consider their respective duties in our bodily functions.

"A" is necessary for growth and normal health; disease prevention, particularly against complaints of the lungs.

"B" is the digestive controller; looks after the appetite and keeps the nerves steady. It definitely promotes happiness, other things being normal.

"C" superintends food absorption or nutrition; is necessary for skin health and promotes good temper.

"D" Teeth and bones, and balance of the blood constituents are supervised by this vitamin.

"E" rebuilds cellular formation as it breaks down in the normal processes of life and prevents premature old age. It preserves youthful energy.

As vitamins have always been present in foods why do they assume such importance today?

For this very simple reason. When foods are over prepared, refined, preserved and almost denuded of all nutritional value, the vitamin elements are also destroyed by these unnatural modern processes, and thus our health suffers. The chemical medicine manufacturers exploit this fact by selling vitamin capsules to make up this loss.

All thinking people will appreciate the lack of wisdom in this procedure.

Fruits, vegetables, grain cereals and dairy products such as milk, butter, cream and cheese are the safest and most prolific sources of vitamins. They are also found in flesh foods but the plant and dairy life formation is the best source to consider from a health point of view.

These foods will maintain body and mental health but they must be prepared carefully for human consumption. At the actual time of collection they are full of vitamins but processing destroys these valuable elements. Thus the less treatment they receive after collection or harvesting the better.

The C, D and E elements are present in fresh, raw fruits, whilst vegetables and leafy greens contain a supply of all the range. Therefore, they should be eaten raw or only conservatively cooked, otherwise their values are wholly or partially lost. If cooking is necessary, do not waste the resultant juices, use them as the basis for gravies or soups.

Milk is our most valuable food and contains all the vitamins in balanced proportion in the most easily assimilable form. Fresh milk, cold or warmed but never boiled should be taken every day, and eggs, the concentrated meat food, should be eaten every other day because of the A and B constituents. It is worth while noting that, contrary to public opinion, eggs should be cooked in water slowly and never boiled. As with milk the boiling process destroys the vitamin content.

With regard to the question of cereal food it is necessary to make sure that only the whole grain is used. In them, in their natural state, we have an abundance of the A, B, C and E elements, but modern processing is very destructive and our usual breads and breakfast foods are almost devoid of vitamins. Wholemeal bread of a reputed make and whole grain cereals are essential for health and these only should be used if we value our well-being.

Beans and peas, called pulses, are also sources of A and B, the body building vitamins. They should always be soaked for a few hours before cooking.

Butter and cheese give us A and B and are undoubtedly the best sources for these two properties.

A moderate supply of the protein foods, added to a generous helping of raw or partially cooked vegetables and fruits, will keep the body and mind fit and well without worrying about vitamin pills, tonics, stimulants, vigour capsules, etc.

It is our duty to ourselves and to others to keep fit and well, otherwise how can we make our contribution to a saner and wiser world if we are only half alive through being ill-nourished? Strangely enough it is cheaper and easier to eat and thrive on natural foods like milk, cheese, eggs, fruits, vegetables and pulses when properly prepared, than to try to subsist on the modern machine processed substitutes which require additional and expensive concentrates to make up their deficiencies.

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