

How to Keep Well---What to Eat

Claribel O'Blenes

This series is intended to supplement the present Health Readers by giving some practical health instruction. The material will have to be adapted by the teacher to the needs of her pupils.

WHAT to eat. Why consider such a question? Most people have their appetites satisfied with food that is more or less pleasing to their tastes. They have formed likes and dislikes satisfactory to themselves. Is there anything more to be desired?

In the modern health movements, food education is one of the important factors. Many organizations have been formed to promote health. They aim at helping the people build strong and healthy bodies. They try to prevent disease. They seek to detect dis-

Foods should meet the needs of the body and should be chosen with these needs in mind.

Food supplies three needs of the body:

It serves as fuel, to give heat and provide energy for both internal and external work.
It furnishes building material, for growth and repair.
It helps to regulate body processes.

If a healthy well nourished body is to be formed, all of these needs must be adequately met. The value of any food depends upon its power to supply one or all of these needs.

Scientists have divided food into five groups, from the standpoint of their chemical constituents. The five foodstuffs are,—proteins, carbohydrates (starches and sugars), fats, mineral salts and water.

Each foodstuff supplies one or more of the body needs. Proteins, fats and carbohydrates are fuel foods.

Carbohydrates furnish the most economical fuel, and the one easiest to digest.

Fats furnish the most concentrated form of fuel. Fats digest at a slow rate, and to a slight degree retard digestion. Fats should be taken in moderation.

Protein is the most expensive form of fuel, not only in money but also in the wear and tear of the body in making use of it. It is the great builder, furnishing material for growth and repair and it should be saved for this purpose. If the fuel needs of the body are supplied by carbohydrates and fats, protein will not be used as fuel, but can carry on the work of building. A small amount of protein is all that the body needs.

Mineral salts are used for growth and repair and as regulators. Some kind of mineral salt is found in all parts of the body. The three most important mineral salts are those containing iron, calcium and phosphorus. Iron is needed in the blood, calcium to make firm bones and good teeth, and phosphorus for all of the cells. Phosphorus is of special value to the nervous system. These salts are found in our foods in



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ease before it becomes incurable. They make use of all the present day knowledge to keep the people well. Our question therefore is, What shall we eat to build strong bodies, and at least prevent the diseases that are due to faulty nutrition?

The teacher's part in promoting health is in the schools with the children. Much scientific investigation has been made, since our Health Readers were written and today the field of health education is rich in practical knowledge, and it can be made one of our most attractive subjects. Children should be taught how to keep themselves physically fit or how to bring themselves up to the standard of physical fitness. The teacher is not in the school just to develop the mind of the child, but is there to develop his life. No child should be handicapped by a physical defect that can easily be removed, or by undernourishment, that can be prevented.