

The flavor of an egg depends in the first place on its freshness and in the second on the food eaten by the hen. It is generally conceded that eggs which are perfectly fresh have the finest flavor, stale eggs are not regarded as palatable, and the flavor of spoiled eggs is alone sufficient to render them unfit for food.

THE DIGESTIBILITY OF EGGS

Investigations as to the length of time different foods remain in the stomach show that two eggs eaten raw, poached, or in the form of an omelet, leave the stomach in from two to three hours, being included in the same class as milk, oysters, white bread, etc. The ordinary kinds of fresh meat leave the stomach in from three to four hours. Various other experiments have been made and from all the evidence it seems fair to conclude that eggs are quite thoroughly digested and that the length of time of cooking has less effect upon the digestibility of the eggs than upon the time required for digestion.

If the absorption of eggs from the intestines is delayed, decomposition ensues with the production of sulphuretted hydrogen and ammonia. These cause considerable trouble in the stomach and intestines, for which the yolk is particularly responsible.

It is therefore a matter of great importance that only eggs which are absolutely fresh should be served to invalids. If the source of supply is unknown, there are two simple methods by which the freshness of an egg may be determined:—

1. Hold the egg between the hands so that the light of a candle may shine through it. If fresh it is more transparent in the centre; if stale it is more transparent at the ends.
2. Make a solution of two ounces of common salt in a pint of water. An egg one day old will sink in this solution, but will not quite reach the bottom; an egg three days old will barely float beneath the surface, and an egg two weeks old will float above the surface, only partially dipping beneath it.

THE VALUE OF EGGS

Eggs are especially rich in protein. This material is required and used to build and repair the tissues of the body. Each egg eaten may be considered to furnish about five per cent. of the daily requirement of protein and from the results of numerous dietary studies it has been calculated that

on an average eggs furnish three per cent. of the total food, 5.9 per cent. of the total protein, and 4.3 per cent. of the total fat used per man per day. And as compared with other food products, eggs may be considered to hold an important place in the average daily dietary, not only on account of the percentage of total food which they constitute, but also on account of the total protein and fat furnished by them.

THE MISUSE OF EGGS

But even a valuable food may be abused, and when patients suffering from tuberculosis consume from twelve to sixteen eggs per day in addition to other food, they are misusing what might otherwise be to them a very valuable food product. The point may be readily illustrated. A very simple diet would be the following:—

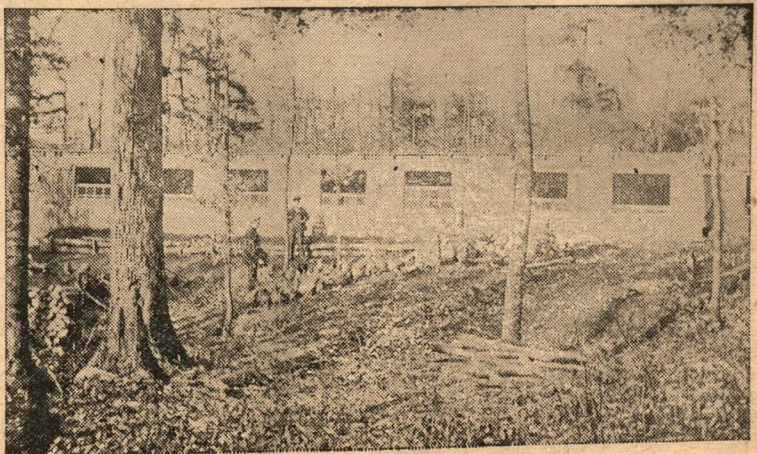
Breakfast—Oatmeal porridge, skim milk, sugar, sausage, bread and butter.

Dinner—Beef flank (stewed), potatoes, cabbage, cornmeal pudding.

Supper—Beef warmed in gravy, hot biscuit, butter, milk.

Yet such a menu would furnish four and one-half ounces of proteid and 3411 calories per individual. Now experiments on tuberculous patients have shown that they should eat daily four and one-half ounces of proteid or just the amount supplied by such a menu.

Whereas if in addition are consumed a dozen eggs, the amount of proteid would be seven and one-half ounces,—a quantity much too high, even if the ordinary standards are accepted. If on the other hand we hold the more modern view that the actual proteid requirement of the body is almost 50 per cent. lower than the figures usually quoted, we would recognize that since it is neither necessary nor advantageous to consume large quantities of proteid which the body can neither use nor store up as reserve material, it is unwise to make such a mistake



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