

# Inter-Com

VOL. 4, NO. 8

JUNE, 1958

DURHAM, N. C.

## DIETETICS — Science and Art

What is the function of a hospital dietetics department? Miss Esther Ratliff, Director of the Department of Dietetics at the Duke University Medical Center, answers this question: "The first consideration is to meet the nutritional needs of the patients, including modifications of normal diets, and to meet the nutritional needs of the staff and personnel." Translated into how many places to set at the table, this means over 1500 meals per day for patients and another 1500 (breakfast, lunch, dinner and midnight lunch) to be served in the Staff Dining Room and the Employees' Dining Room—a grand total of approximately 100,000 meals a month. For an average morning's breakfast 150 dozen eggs are requisitioned. When hamburgers are on the menu for the entire house it takes 400 pounds of ground beef. One hundred and ten fryers must be cut up to provide fried chicken for the staff cafeteria alone. The cooks will use 250 pounds of potatoes for a noon meal. The bake shop will bake 35 blueberry pies (for patients) and 15 blueberry cobblers, 45 servings each, (for cafeterias) for an evening meal. This requires four 30-pound cans of frozen blueberries. When baked sliced turkey is served at Sunday dinner, it takes twenty-five 25-pound turkeys (625 pounds of turkey).

The dietitian's work is many faceted: menu-making and food purchasing which involves food specifications



Duke Photo by Sparks

THE DIETETICS STAFF panel-tests a loaf of salt-free bread. Left to right: Mary Catherine Male, Dorothy Falcone, Helen McLachlan, Esther Ratliff, Margaret Ann Brown, Margaret Presley, Shirley Manning, Barbara Raby, Nancy Curtis.

and requisitioning; planning layouts and purchasing equipment for food areas; sanitation in all food areas; personnel management and employee training—the Duke Department of Dietetics has a staff of 8 and over 190 employees. In addition to these phases of the work which relate directly to the preparation of food, a department of dietetics affiliated with a teaching institution, itself must carry a sizeable teaching load.

In Duke Hospital one-third of the patients are on modified diets. The Department of Dietetics is engaged in the preparation of a new diet manual. Selective menus are now in use on all private patient floors. Presented on the breakfast tray, the selective menu carries the choices for the following day's lunch and dinner and for breakfast the morning after that.

This allows adequate time for requisitioning of necessary foods. Plans are underway for opening the Ambulatory Cafeteria on the third floor of the new wing. This cafeteria will accommodate 90 patients. The tray assembly belt on the second floor of the new wing now serves Hanes, Minot, Reed and Cushing wards—approximately 160 trays. This belt is flanked on one side by containers for hot food and on the other by refrigerators for cold food. A tray can be assembled in one and one half minutes. Trays for the second floor are delivered on rolling carts which will carry six trays each. Those for the third floor move automatically off the tray assembly belt onto a belt which places them in a vertical Trayveyor to be carried to the third floor. Soiled trays and dishes are sent down on