

# Do yourself a favor

By David Williamson

If losing weight is high on your list of resolutions for the New Year, you can do yourself a big fat favor by avoiding most "miracle" diets and food fads.

That's the opinion of Dr. Sue Y.S. Kimm, a nutrition expert who is assistant professor of pediatrics here.

"Hardly a day goes by that I don't come across a newspaper or magazine article extolling some fabulous feats of Dr. Joe Blow's latest miracle diet," she said in an interview.

The problem with weight-reducing and food fads, according to Kimm, is that many of them don't work, while others can be positively dangerous.

"It's important that all of us realize that we live in a real world where there is no constant occurrence of miracles," she said. "Unfortunately, we tend to be lazy. We want to be passive recipients of magic rather than active participants in our own health programs."

## Dislikes use of 'diet'

Kimm, who holds masters degrees in both nutrition and public health from Harvard in addition to her Yale M.D., says she dislikes even the way the word "diet" is used today.

"In popular usage, 'diet' implies something that is self-limited or temporary," she explained. "You hear people say 'I went on a diet last week' or 'Today, I completed my diet.'"

Originally, the Greek meaning of "diet" was "a manner of living or life style," and Kimm prefers to have her patients think of dietary rehabilitation as a change in nutritional life style.

## We eat too much

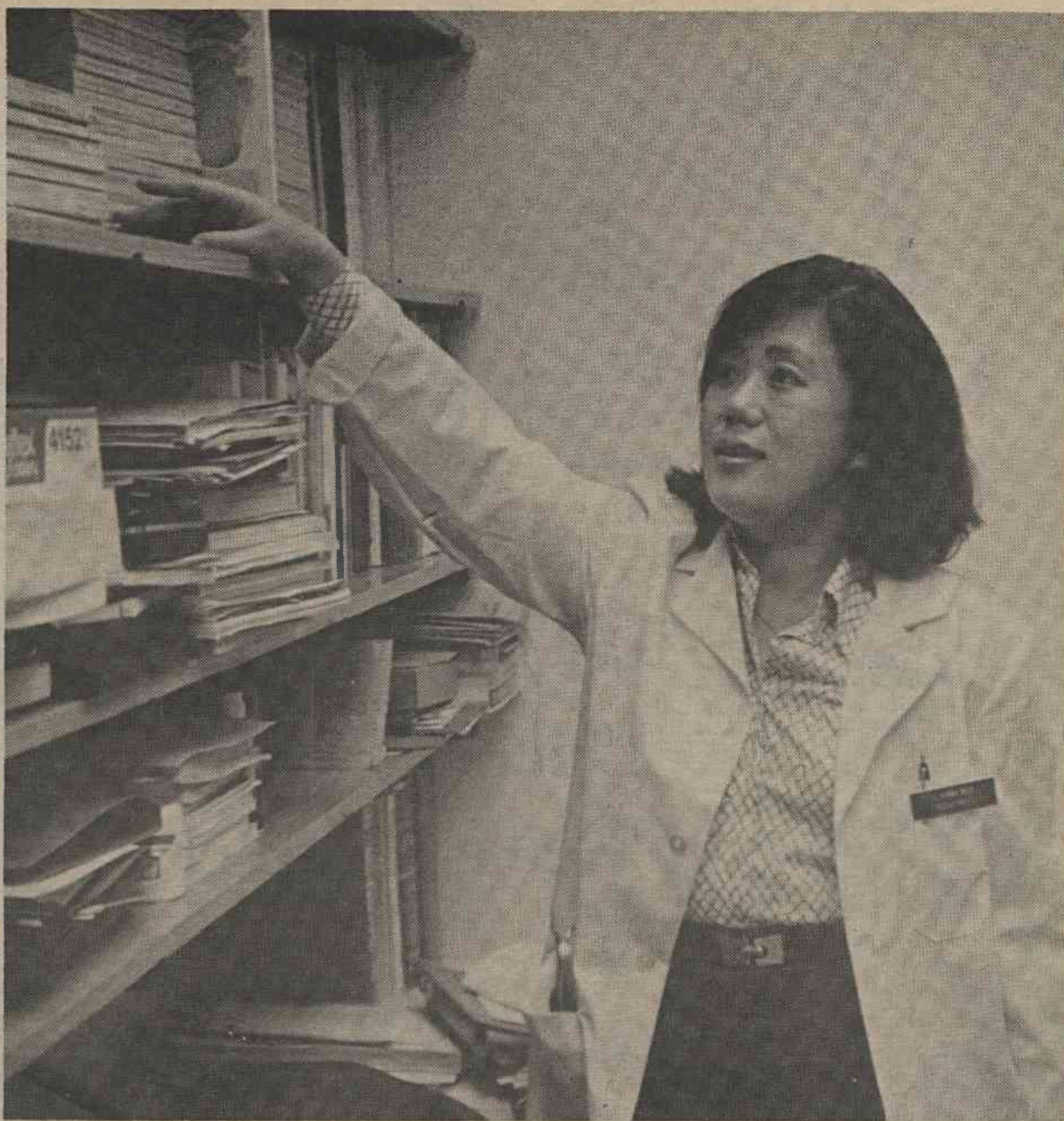
"Americans as a group eat too much food," she said. "At least 30 per cent of us are significantly overweight, and obesity has been called our number one health problem."

She points to a Department of Agriculture study that estimated that Americans could reduce the amount of heart disease by 25 per cent, and in turn save \$30 billion a year, simply by changing their eating habits.

## Wishful thinking

Eating fads and miracle diet books make a lot of money for authors, publishers and certain retail stores, but seldom help the consumer stay slim or become particularly healthy, she said. They attract wishful thinkers because they promise something for nothing more than their purchase price.

(Continued on page 3)



DR. SUE Y.S. KIMM cites reports that "miracle" diets can be dangerous.

## Infrared light measures oxygen

(Continued from page 1)

techniques for measuring metabolism in living tissue for 20 years, but it has only been within the past year that he discovered how deeply infrared light can penetrate.

He now is working on applying the technology toward oxygen sufficiency in the heart. Lack of the essential element in heart tissue results in heart attacks.

Two other applications he envisions include regulating the amount of oxygen administered to premature babies in hospital nurseries and determining whether blood is flowing adequately through certain vessels after surgery.

Too much oxygen is toxic and can cause infants to go blind, he said. Too little oxygen will cause skin flap transplants and fingers that have been reattached after accidents to die.

"I think this work may become a good example of the benefits that accrue from basic research for the alleviation of human illness and suffering," he added.



## From Intercoms of December 1954 and February 1955

Duke Hospital's Medical Town Hall makes its TV Debut...over WTVD, channel 11. Subject of the first TV program will be "Holiday Accidents in the Home" with Dr. Jay Arena and Dr. George Ferguson as speakers. Dr. George Baylin, creator of the program, will be moderator.

Dr. Eugene A. Stead recently was named to two top national posts. He will serve on the National Advisory Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases Council and has been named vice chairman of the American Heart Association's Scientific Council.

Steamshovels have been in full swing at Duke Hospital, as excavation got underway for the new \$3,000,000 addition to the hospital. The new wing, which will provide 109 new beds and a number of badly-needed clinic and waiting areas, will be seven stories high and is expected to be completed in December, 1956.

Dr. Roy Parker has joined the Ob. Gyn. Department as an associate professor, following residency here. Dr. Bernard Bresslar, now completing a two-year tour with the U.S. Army at Fort Belvoir, Va., will join the Duke Department of Psychiatry March 1.

Elon Clark of the Department of Medical Illustration is serving as one of six associate directors in the current campaign for a new \$550,000 YMCA in Durham.

A familiar sight on the wards these days is Miss Ann Jacobansky, newly-appointed dean of the Duke University Nursing School. In announcing the appointment, Dean Davison described the new dean as a "real asset to the nursing school staff. Medical school and hospital personnel have expressed enthusiastic support of her appointment."

Another Splendid Sale was a huge success and will benefit the Auxiliary's special project: the new playroom on Howland Ward. The Howland Playroom Fund has been augmented by about \$25 recently — the proceeds of the Christmas greens sale managed by Mrs. Bayard Carter and Mrs. Paul Horton just before the holidays.

## Intercom

is published weekly by the Office of Public Relations, Duke University Medical Center, Box 3354, Durham, N.C. 27710.

Joe Sigler  
Director

John Becton  
Editor

Primary contributors: William Erwin, Comprehensive Cancer Center medical writer; Ina Fried, staff writer; Parker Herring, public relations assistant; Edith Roberts, staff writer; David Williamson, medical writer.  
Circulation: Ann Kittrell.