

Medical Notes . . .



My Aching Back!

by Dr. James Stout

After the common cold, I believe we see more muscle aches and pains than any other complaint. The most common of these is pain in the lower back. At times it's more than a pain, perhaps even a "ruptured disc" that may require surgery — the medical "last resort" — to attempt repair.

We tend to take for granted that our back will perform as needed, but like any other mechanical structure, it can fail if not cared for intelligently and consistently.

Care of the back is no more trouble than dental care, and certainly of equal importance.

Visualize the spine as 24 spools of thread, stacked one atop the other, with a resilient cushion between each spool. The stack is kept from collapse by fibrous bindings holding each spool to the other, and further strengthened and stabilized by muscles outside the column, holding it in position. Through the holes in the center runs a complex bundle of electrical wires, the nerves, going to many places, including the back muscles themselves.

Should a cushion (disc; cartilage with a liquid core) collapse, or a binding (the ligament holding adjacent "spools" together) loosen, or if a muscle of the support system should become slack, the spools (vertebrae) may slide about enough to pinch one of the nerves going to back muscles. The result is a spasm, a severe tightening of the muscle. This is painful.

If the spasm and pain are in the small of the back, we call it "acute lumbosacral strain", and the victim may be in real trouble.

Repair is difficult; prevention is much more desirable.

Care of the back is a matter of minimizing bending of the column and keeping good muscle tone, assuring a strong and elastic stabilizing system.

To avoid unnecessary bending of the spine, try to do lifting with the more powerful leg muscles, bending at the knees, with knees fairly close together and the back as straight as possible, not bent at the waist. Avoid overhead lifting, if you can. If it's necessary, keep the object close to your body, with the elbows bent, to minimize pressure and arching in the lower back.

Keep your back muscles toned with regular exercise, so a time of heavier labor doesn't give you "over-doer's backache". Another ticket to misery is getting chilled after working up a sweat.

"Regular exercise", as called for, is neither strenuous nor time-consuming. Ask us for written directions. The exercises also strengthen your abdominal muscles, very important for a healthy back.

I recommend a firm mattress, or a bed-board, 30 to 36 inches wide between your mattress and box springs. If you use a board, make it of half inch plywood, to reach from shoulders to hips.

Lastly, if your back hurts, and you're not sure your legs are of equal length, have that checked! For a number of fellow employees, a simple adjustment there has been the simple cure to a serious problem.

A bit of thought and a few minutes exercise may keep a healthy back in good shape and avoid "back trouble". For work, play, and enjoying life in general, it's well worth the effort.



"YOU must decide!" **LEWIS WHITESIDE** makes his point at the Western Carolina Safety Council meeting. His speech, "Safety on Trial", was First Award Winner in the foremen's safety talk contest.



HENRY ADAMS responds to well-wishers at his retirement party: "I bought a couple of rocking chairs, but they're for sale!" He adds, "As a boy, I once tried to walk to a rainbow's end. Now, with my family and the job I've had, I may have found both ends—one at my home, on Rice Street in Brevard, and the other in the place we've worked together." Henry has 29 years of company service.

seen & heard

Here's good news! A baby boy for **Kim and Mary Smith: Seth** was born April 8. ★ **Donny and Terry Credille** have a daughter, **Shannon Alyse**. ★ **Randy and Melody Owenby** were married in April. ★ **Steve and Pam Justus** have presented Grampa **Jim Justus**

with a third grandchild: **James Cody**. ★ Belated congratulations to 4th-time-grandfather **Bill Baughn**. **Jason** was born to **Robert Baughn** and **Mary** back in January. ★ Best wishes to **Tom Dills** and **Margaret** (Chapman), married April 21. ★ A third daughter for **Paul and Sue Owenby: Jennifer Susan**. ★ And two daughters at once for **Marlin Wiltz** and **Sandi**: Twin girls **Crys-**

tal Dawn and **Kacey Leigh** joined the family March 12. ★ "Just be patient," said **Jerry Moore** to his son, **Don**. "You can't get a DuPont job overnight; it takes time." But **Don** gave up and followed Dad's other example: joined the Navy. Now he's on the **USS DuPont**. ★ **Jim Gosnell** and **Gay** plan a May 22 wedding. ★ A promise is a promise. We didn't tell about **Rob Daniels'** pet chick-

en. ★ Many thanks to those who contribute items for Seen & Heard! ★ If you were at the DERA Spring Dance—did you notice that the band seemed different from the poster picture? Someone skillfully corrected hair styles with a pencil, and gave one of the musicians a neat moustache. ★ Share your good news! Call 5862, or drop a note in the mail.