

Heart Fund Officials Warning Against 'Health Food' Peddlers

Chapel Hill.—Beware of the advice given by "health food" promoters, door-to-door vitamin salesmen and special diet hucksters, a state health agency suggests.

In olden days, masked highway bandits approached lonely travelers with the spine-tingling demand: "Your money or your life." Today, there are many merchants of quackery in the health field who use hook and crook to go after your money and your life, as a recent Food and Drug Administration publication warns.

The North Carolina Heart Association urges Tar Heels to "get wise to these health peddlers" and joins various governmental, pharmaceutical and medical groups in offering some tips on how to spot health gyps:

If it is a "secret remedy," you can almost bet your bottom dollar that you are dealing with a fake. If the ad claims a non-prescription drug is good for heart trouble, it probably is better for the manufacturer's bank roll than for the patient's heart. If the sponsor claims he is battling the medical profession which is trying to suppress his wonderful discovery, you might also have reason to suspect you are being hoodwinked. If the treatment was ballyhooed in a sensational magazine, you might be wise to be skeptical. And if your doctor disapproves of the particular "remedy" or "cure," you would be smart to stick with medical knowledge and to shun pseudo-medical junk—for your heart's sake.

High on the heart agency's list of health frauds are the vendors of "instant health" and "do-it-yourself medicine." Many so-called health books currently popular are examples of sheer poppycock—for example, a recent bestseller which labeled honey and vinegar a cure-all charm against almost every kind of ailment.

There are quite a few diet books which advocate practices which could be most harmful to persons taking them seriously; dietary cure-alls promoted by food faddists are often confused by wishful thinkers with special dietary prescriptions, such as low-salt and low-fat diets prescribed by physicians for heart patients. The Heart Association points out that the word "health" in "health foods" does not make such products healthful or more healthful than other food.

North Carolinians are urged to use their common sense, and the Heart Association stresses that it makes little sense to let "doctor books" substitute for a doctor. Some parents raise their children by the book (or magazine articles) and forget all too often that a parent-with-a-book still doesn't qualify for a medical degree. Strep throats, if treated by parents as regular sore throats, can lead to rheumatic fever and possibly to serious heart damage, for example.

High blood pressure, "kidney trouble" and "bladder trouble" may indicate disease which can-

not be treated by self-medication, despite the claims of some hustlers of patent medicine and folk remedies.

Calories do count, despite false claims made in a book for weight reduction and heart disease. As for "royal jelly," ocean water, safflower oil capsules and "tired feeling" remedies, most of these are either totally useless or actually harmful because they mask symptoms of disease or keep patients from their doctors until it's too late.

The average Tar Heel wouldn't hire a rainmaker to pull a tooth or repair a television set. The North Carolina Heart Association thinks that door to door "health" salesmen ought to have front doors slammed rudely in their faces. What one writer has termed a "mail-order supermarket" of nutritional gimmicks is an especially serious problem. This mail-order smorgasboard of pills, elixirs and superfoods is a multi-billion dollar racket nationally, custom-made for "people who have everything"—except a mature concern for their own health.

As for nature doctors and health practitioners who propose to diagnose and treat diseases simply by turning dials on Rube Goldberg machines, they may be professionals, but they certainly don't belong to the medical profession, according to the state health group.

Millions of dollars are spent each year by North Carolinians on falsely promoted, worthless or dangerous products and millions more are wasted on so-called health foods. Worse than the financial loss, however, is the risk that reliance on some ineffective product may cause delay in getting proper medical treatment.

It is against the law to promote and distribute these worthless or dangerous medical devices and cures but it takes continuing public cooperation to stem this criminal assault on the public and its health.

LIONS MEET MONDAY
Edenton Lions will hold their weekly meeting Monday night, February 8 at 7 o'clock at the Edenton Restaurant. President Joe Thorud urges every Lion to be present.

ROTARIANS MEET TODAY
Edenton Rotarians will hold their weekly meeting this (Thursday) afternoon at 1 o'clock in the Parish House. President West Byrum urges a 100 per cent attendance.

Use Force
The nurse in Scotland was trying to persuade old Mary to take some liquid food.

"Will you take some beef tea, Mary?"

"Na," replied Mary. "I couldn't tak' it."

"Perhaps you would care for a cup of cocoa?"

"Na, I couldna ta' that either."

"Well, what about a glass of toddy?"

"Aye," responded the invalid. "Mak' it strong and mak' me ta' it."

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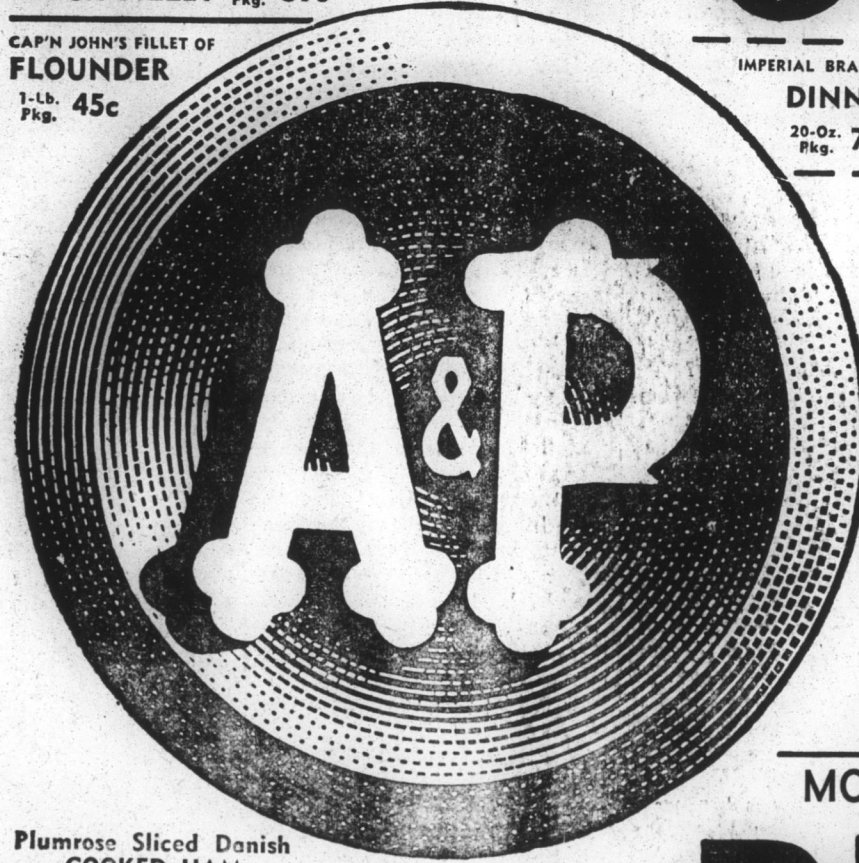
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