

Pregnancy

(Continued from Page 10) message to health professionals through its *Drug Bulletin* and to the public through publications such as its *FDA Consumer* magazine. (The October 1980 *FDA Consumer* contains an excellent background article on caffeine. Another article, *How Our Coffee Is Decaffeinated*, appeared in the May 1980 issue.)

• FDA is proposing to redefine cola and pepper soft drinks so that these names can be used on caffeine-free versions.

• FDA will remove caffeine from its list of food additives regarded as safe and propose placing caffeine on an interim list. This would let caffeine be used as it is now, until further studies are carried out by industry, under FDA supervision. One study will compare the caffeine consumption of pregnant women and the rates of birth defects in their offspring.

If you would like more information on taking care of yourself during pregnancy, *When the Baby's Life Is So Much Your Own* discusses nutrition and the use of medicine, x rays, alcohol, and tobacco. Free copies are available by writing to the Consumer Information Center, Department 525H, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

If you want information on food, drug, and cosmetic regulatory actions, subscribe to the *FDA Consumer*. It costs \$12 a year for 10 issues and may be ordered through the Consumer Information Center, Department 172H, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

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SCIENCE SPOTLIGHT

EARTHQUAKES

When you feel that the earth is moving under your feet you may be imagining things. But if you live in an area in which earthquakes are part of the nature of things, there is no place to "take cover".

An earthquake is a shaking, rolling or sudden shock of the earth's surface. There may be as many as a million earthquakes in a single year. Large earthquakes cause violent motions of the earth's surface. Sometimes they cause huge sea waves that sweep up on land and add to the general destruction. Such waves often occur in the Pacific Ocean because of many earthquakes there. Geologists use a Japanese word "tsunami" for these destructive waves.

According to a theory which scientists hold as valid, the surface of the earth consists of about 20 rigid plates that move slowly past one another. The motion of these plates squeezes and stretches rocks at the edges of the plates. If the force becomes too great, the rocks rupture (break) and shift, causing an earthquake. These ruptures are called faults. Most faults lie beneath the surface, some are visible. Energy released in an earthquake travels away from the fault in waves called seismic waves. Near the focus (the place where the rupture begins) vibrations of the seismic waves can cause a great deal of destruction.

Almost all of the world's major earthquakes occur in two great belts—the Circum-Pacific belt and the Alpine belt. The Circum-Pacific belt is sometimes called the Ring of Fire. This area accounts for more than three-fourths of the world's earthquakes. Although scientists can guess at where an earthquake may occur, no solid pattern for prediction has been formulated as yet. Fire is the greatest danger from an earthquake.

(Preparation of this article was made possible by a grant from NSF. The views of this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of NSF.)

Cranberries were originally called crane berries. And they were named that because the bud and stem resembled the head and neck of a crane.

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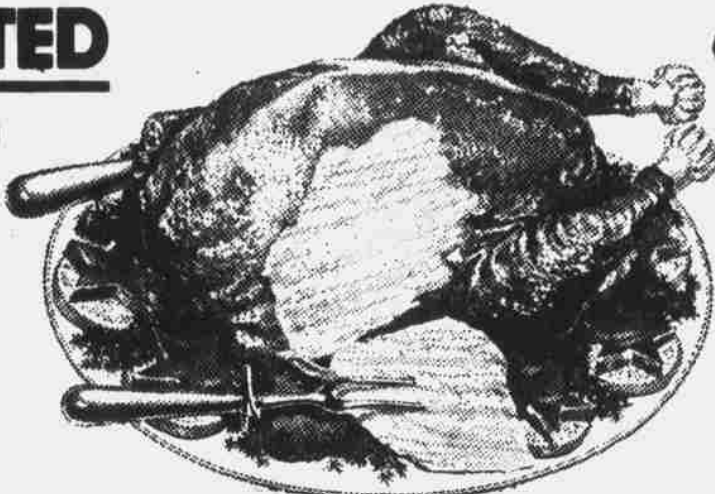
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