

HEALTH IS WEALTH

HEADACHE AND HYGIENE

by the STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Particular questions on health, hygiene and sanitation of general interest to our readers will be answered in these columns or by mail if addressed to this office or to the State Board of Health, Raleigh, N. C. No diagnosis or treatment of individual diseases will be attempted.

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A Stroke of Paralysis.

In the past twenty or thirty years, while the death rate among babies, youths, young adults, and even persons of advanced age, has steadily declined, thanks to better public health measures and improved sanitation, the death rate for adults of mature age, that is, middle age, has steadily increased. This anomaly is at present giving the health authorities of the whole country concern, and it is high time to start a drive against the conditions which account for the dangers of middle age. We know those conditions pretty well.

While such scourges as tuberculosis, pneumonia, typhoid fever and the food infections called "cholera infantum" have been diminished in prevalence as sanitation has improved, the four great degenerations of middle age—namely, cancer, Bright's disease, heart disease and apoplexy—have slightly increased in prevalence. The cause of cancer is as yet unknown, but we know much about the causes of the other three perils of maturity.

Apoplexy, for instance is commonly called a stroke of paralysis, and is produced by hemorrhage into the brain from a break or rupture of a small

artery in the brain. The artery ruptures when some excessive strain is put upon it, as from too hearty eating, great anger or other emotional excitement, excessive physical effort, alcoholic excess or other excesses. But the artery would withstand the strain were it not a diseased or degenerated artery. It is damaged by ill usage. The victim has lived too fast, too well, too strenuously. He has neglected the vital matter of personal hygiene, and worn out his arteries too early in life. He may have overworked—he likes to think so; but usually it is not overwork, but the resort to alcohol, tobacco or even drugs to tide over periods of fatigue or exhaustion from overwork, that accounts for the degeneration of the arteries.

Apoplexy may occur in spite of a low blood pressure, although an extremely high blood pressure is most frequently present in one with the predisposition to apoplexy.

Over-eating is recognized as one of the chief, if not the chief, predisposing causes of the arterial diseases which bring on apoplexy. People who begin to put on superfluous weight after thirty-five years are necessarily headed toward apoplexy, yet they will make no mistake in adopting hygienic measures of prevention for the good of general health. Not only the obviously stout and plethoric or full-blooded individual, but also the pale and slender may have a stroke of paralysis. Still, the stout, over-nourished type, with short thick neck predominates among victims of apoplexy.

One of the most effective, preventative measures known today is the annual medical examination. When your doctor knows you, as a mechanic knows a machine he has overhauled thoroughly once a year, he is capable of detecting the earliest changes in heart action, blood pressure, kidney function and general conditions which always long antedate a threatened stroke of paralysis.

Weakness appearing. This manifests itself by a strange sensation of numbness and coldness all over the body. Along with it, perhaps, the lips and finger-nails or sometimes the whole surface of the skin may become blue or livid. This latter change is in part due to circulatory weakness, but largely to a serious change in the blood, the oxygen of the hemoglobin of the red corpuscles being crowded out by the poison.

Nausea, collapse, vomiting, cold blue skin, faintness, clammy perspiration and other alarming, sometimes fatal symptoms may follow even a few doses of acetanilide in one whose heart or blood is not perfect.

Some people grow so fond of the effect of the migraine, neuralgia or pain tablet containing this drug that they take it daily or several times a day, whenever they feel tired or weary or depressed in any way. Such a habit is ruinous to the health, and has repeatedly led to the insane hospital.

The anemia (lack of blood) and nervous weakness produced by frequent resort to alleged "safe" medicines containing acetanilide or its congeners are exceedingly difficult to overcome, even when the habit is stopped.

Before you indulge in the "cold cure" that kills a cold in one day, or the headache or gripe or migraine or neuralgia tablet or powder that comes so highly recommended by those who profit on the sale, better make sure about the acetanilide.

Look the label over carefully. If in doubt, consult the health authorities.

The Acetanilide Habit.

People who think self-treatment for minor ailments or what seems to be slight illnesses in the beginning, is economy—and there are still many who harbor that delusion—ought to know a few things about the dangers of acetanilide.

Acetanilide is a comparatively cheap chemical derived from coal-tar. In its effect it varies but slightly from phenacetine and tinnpyrin. But, being the cheaper chemical it is more commonly employed in the popular headache remedies; the neuralgia and migraine tablets, the "gripe" and "cold" remedies. In fact, acetanilide is dispensed with a lavish hand by the manufacturers of all sorts of popular nostrums intended to kill ache or pain or distress.

Acetanilide does knock out pain, but at some cost to physical well being. It numbs the vital brain centers, depresses the heart, destroys red corpuscles, and tends to weaken or paralyze the nerves. That is how it kills pain. That is also the reason why the "poor" Food and Drugs Act requires that makers of dope containing acetanilide or phenacetine must state the quantities of the poison on the label. Look at the label before you down the "harmless" remedy!

One who takes a few doses of headache, gripe, neuralgia or "cold" cure, so-called, may be temporarily freed of his ache or pain or distress, but there is always a chance of alarming heart

BEWARE OF GREEKS BEARING GIFTS.

Headache Cures, Grippe, Neuralgia and One Day Cold Cures Often Contain Acetanilide.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Keep the Colt Growing.

My boy of five years has not gained any weight in eight months and, naturally, I am a little more anxious than I would be if one of my colts would stop growing. I would appreciate any suggestions as to literature on children that might be good for a layman to read.

Answer—From the description, it may be almost anything from hookworms to heart disease or taints to tuberculosis. Take him to a good doctor, one who will make a careful examination of from fifteen to thirty minutes, and ask a lot of questions as to his past history, health and habits. We are sending you our free literature. Write to the Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C., for free publication, or read "Our Baby," by Clerk; "We and Our Children," by Woods Hutchinson, or "Care of the Child's Health," by Oppenheim.

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