

DIETETICS

Balancing the Diet

BY DR. H. C. MENKEL, M.D.

A balanced nutrition means that the daily diet is so selected as to provide all the essential seven food factors, and that these factors are present in correct proportional quantity, protein, carbohydrates, fat, mineral salts, vitamins, cellulose and water.

The protein must be of the "complete" variety. If of an incomplete source, as dahl for example, there must be added some complementary food substance which supplies the particular protein defect, thus making a "complete" protein out of an otherwise incomplete one.

There are five known groups of vitamins. Unless these "accessory food factors" are all present there cannot be perfect digestion and assimilation. Each vitamin is responsible for the digestion in the body of a particular food element. Unless therefore the food element and its "accessory" vitamin factor are both present the normal nutritional process of that meal will be a failure. Should such failure extend over any considerable period the consequent disaster becomes apparent in terms of lowered efficiency, and often undefined ill-health.

Fat, which occupies such an important place in the diet of India, is in addition to its full value, the vehicle for vitamin D. Therefore, if the fat supply is from an inactive source like certain vegetable oils in which there is no vitamin D, then this vitamin must be added by introducing another food source. Thus the diet becomes balanced in this respect.

A third item to keep in view is the acid-alkaline balance. Life consists of a dual process,—anabolism (building-up) and katabolism (breaking-down). The former requires an alkaline tissue environment, the latter is the process of decay, disintegration and death. This is acid producing.

Nature calls for an excess of alkalinity. This is provided for by such foods as leave in the body after their digestion a rich residue of alkaline salts. All the foods of man are not alkaline ash-forming. Some foods are acid-forming.

The well-balanced diet should provide for eighty parts alkaline ash-forming foods to twenty parts acid ash-forming foods.

The total bulk and weight of the body is about five-sixths water. This would indicate that a well-balanced daily ration must provide an adequate supply of water, about four to six pints, to make up for the daily loss.

The above paragraphs are intended as a brief summary for the more detailed consideration under separate heads in following studies.

The writer will be pleased to receive questions and suggestions helping him to make the studies of this section as practical and useful as possible. Address me direct as below.

H. C. MENKEL, M.D.,
B.D.S. Bldg., The Mall, Lahore.

To know a genuine diamond just touch it with the tongue. It will be seen much colder than an artificial stone.