

DIETETICS

Protein and the European Diet.

The objective of nature regarding the protein factor of our diet is to provide for construction and repair. This is the major function of protein in the biological process.

The opportunity to utilize constructional material of the protein type is limited to an almost fixed amount by the constant rate of daily tissue change, which in the adult varies only slightly with changes in nature of work done.

The protein requirement of the average adult, for a period of twenty-four hours, is represented by four to six ounces of a complete protein food like meat or eggs, or curd of milk. If the protein factor is to be provided from a less concentrated food source, then the quantity of such food will need to be increased to provide the equivalent of four to six ounces concentrated protein.

The four to six ounces as a maximum requirement is a very important health factor; and it is right here that we are confronted with the protein problem as represented in the European diet.

Flesh foods constitute the source of complete protein for the average European in India,—not once daily but three times daily; not six ounces only, but several times six ounces are partaken of.

According to the best authorities on nutrition this is now recognized as a very serious mistake, resulting in functional and structural changes associated with chronic degenerative diseases. Such findings call for decided changes in dietary practice.

Nature has made no provision for storing excess protein intake. All such excess must be eliminated.

If this were only a matter of being discharged from the body as so much excess material, representing at its worst, financial extravagance, the mistake would not be so serious.

The detrimental effect of excess protein is largely due to the acid ash residue left after digestion. Acidity means death to body tissues, and relative acidity means disturbed tissue functioning.

Therefore, in an attempt to avoid this disaster, nature calls forth from cell tissue her alkaline reserve.

Whenever this store of alkaline tissue salts is drawn upon in an effort to neutralize excess acid protein ash, the essential alkaline environment is disturbed. This depleted alkaline reserve becomes manifest as pains, discomforts, lowered working efficiency, tired feeling, with other phases of ill-health, and physical and mental handicaps.

While the names of disease conditions produced by excess protein are many the cause is largely one.

This brief consideration suggests one important and effective method of preventing a group of chronic degenerative disorders which are decidedly on the increase among adults past forty years of age.

Produce protein intake to near the minimum daily requirement of four ounces. In addition to this restriction provide an ample daily supply of alkaline ash forming foods, so as to protect the tissue alkaline reserve against undue drain.

Science says that the heavy meals of meat, potatoes and bread of our ancestors are acid-producing and must give place to a larger amount of green leafy vegetables. Some of these greens must be eaten raw to insure ample vitamin content. But more on this phase later.

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