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MEDICINE

Tuberculosis Germs Are in Bodies of All Civilized People

Their Attack is Successful, As It Was With the President's Son, When the Body is in a Weakened Condition

ANNOUNCEMENT that the President's son, Herbert Hoover, Jr., is suffering from tuberculosis, will surprise many people. Tuberculosis, however, is no respecter of persons and anyone, old or young, rich or poor, fat or thin, strong or weak, city dweller or countryman, may get it.

As a matter of fact, nearly all grown persons in civilized countries have the germs of tuberculosis in their bodies. When your resistance is weakened because of overwork, as in the case of the President's son, or because of pneumonia, influenza, grippe, continuous loss of sleep or some other cause, the germs in your body attack you and the disease develops.

The cure of tuberculosis depends chiefly on early recognition and on faithful adherence to treatment. The most important factor in the treatment is rest, which must be taken in bed.

The tuberculosis germs may attack any part of the body, but they most frequently attack the lungs. Our lungs must work with every breath we draw, so rest for them is relative. When we are exercising, or moving about in any way, we are giving our lungs more work to do. Their work is easiest when we are asleep or lying quietly in bed. So for tuberculosis of the lungs, absolute rest in bed is necessary to give the lungs their chance to fight off the disease.

Early Signs of Disease

Most people think cough, hemorrhage or spitting of blood, and wasting fever are the only signs of tuberculosis. These are late signs of the disease. Early signs are weakness and a tired feeling. Irritability is another of the early symptoms. So are loss of appetite and disturbance of digestion. Pain in the chest or in the back between the shoulder blades or in the shoulder is another early symptom, which is sometimes mistaken for rheumatism.

Tuberculosis is no longer the menace in this country that it once was when it earned the name of white plague. The death rate from this disease has

decreased more than one-half since 1900. Statisticians estimate that in 50 years more tuberculosis in America will be almost eradicated.

For the individual who recognizes the symptoms of tuberculosis early, promptly consults a competent doctor and follows his directions, the outlook is distinctly good. The length of time required for recovery varies in different patients. All of them who recover, however, must be especially careful not to overdo, either in work or play or worry. A second attack is more readily acquired than the first and is harder to overcome.

Science News Letter, October 4, 1930

CHEMISTRY

Triorthocresyl Phosphate Brought Death in Drink

CONVINCING and final proof that technical triorthocresyl phosphate was the cause of thousands of cases of paralysis attributed to drinking Jamaica ginger has been announced by the U. S. Public Health Service.

Ginger itself is completely exonerated from the charges of causing the mysterious paralysis which broke out in southern and southwestern states early in the year. The Jamaica ginger drink which caused the paralysis was adulterated with the tricresyl phosphate. Ginger snaps, ginger bread and various other ginger delicacies need not be shunned for fear of the disease. The U. S. Public Health Service has no record of a single case of paralysis caused by ginger put out by a reputable pharmaceutical manufacturer.

The adulterant responsible for the paralysis is a relative of carbolic acid. It is widely used in trade circles in the manufacture of varnishes, shellacs, etc. It is cheap and easily obtainable and was probably used because its physical characteristics make it hard to distinguish from normal ginger constituents.

Science News Letter, October 4, 1930