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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, September 8, 1941

SUBJECT: "Apple Notes." Information from scientists at various State Agricultural Experiment Stations.

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Most people eat apples for pleasure. But there are plenty of other good reasons for eating apples, according to scientists at a number of State experiment stations who have been studying this popular American fruit lately. Apple research has been going on recently in States as far apart as Washington, and Virginia, Minnesota, Massachusetts and New York. Most of the scientists who have been doing this research agree that apples have special health qualities. The old American custom of munching raw apples and plenty of them every day is a healthful custom. Those old sayings--"An apple a day keeps the doctor away," and "Six apples a day keep head aches away"--have plenty of truth behind them. Modern scientific research backs up what our forefathers learned from experience about apples.

Reports from both the Virginia Station and the Washington State Station mention the fact that apples are helpful in keeping the intestinal tract of the body healthy. In fact, doctors are now using apples to treat various intestinal disorders. Even young babies with diseases like dysentery or typhoid receive the apple treatment. They are fed ripe, mellow, raw scraped or grated apple or dried apple powder.

Well babies also are having apple these days. Some of them have trouble digesting cow's milk. Apple powder put in the milk softens the curd and makes the milk easier to digest.

Nobody knows yet what gives the apple its healing or curing power. But many scientists now believe it is the pectin in the apple. Apples are rich in pectin, as every woman who makes jelly knows. And pectin has been found helpful in curing wounds.

Another good reason for eating apples is vitamin C. And by the way, this is the time of year to begin to think seriously about vitamin C. Winter meals are likely to run low in this vitamin. And then winter ills follow. Everybody in the family needs an ample supply of C every day to keep in good health. Several recent studies show that children whose winter meals contain plenty of C suffer less from colds, lack of energy and other common ills than children who are low in this vitamin. Apples can do a lot toward supplying the vitamin C your family needs every day.

To be sure, in tests for vitamin C, apples don't rank as high as some other foods--citrus fruits, or tomatoes, or fresh cabbage, to mention a few. But because of that good American habit of eating several apples every day and eating them raw, many people get all the vitamin C they need just from apples. The scientists have found that raw apples are richer in C than cooked apples, and that apples freshly gathered in the fall are richer in C than apples in the spring which have been stored all winter. They also find that the skin of apples is rich in C.

Variety counts, too in vitamin C. Scientists at the Washington Station, testing western apples of commercial importance, found Winesaps, Spitzenbergs and Rome Beauties 3 times as rich in vitamin C as Jonathans, Delicious or Richared. But any variety of apple is a help in supplying C.

Scientists at the Virginia Station testing varieties of Virginia apples reported as best for vitamin C: Black Twig, Winter Banana, Ben Davis, Winesap and York Imperial. Two or three of these varieties can give you your quota of vitamin C for the day. To get the same amount of vitamin C from some other varieties you would need to eat 7 or 8 apples.

The way you store your apples may also have much to do with how much vitamin C you get from them. Apples stored at a temperature just above freezing keep their vitamin C longer than those kept in a warmer place. Tests at the Virginia Station

showed that apples stored at 38 degrees Fahrenheit lost almost half of their original vitamin C in 6 months. So toward spring you need to eat more apples--perhaps twice as many as at this time of year -- to get the same amount of vitamin C.

The Virginia Station also reports that apple peel usually is 4 to 5 times as concentrated in vitamin C as the flesh of the apple.

Then here's a point about cooking apples. The shorter the cooking, the more vitamin C--and also natural apple flavor--you're likely to save. An apple baked slowly in the oven, or apples baked in pie, contain less vitamin C than quickly cooked apple sauce, or a whole apple cooked quickly in sirup on top of the stove.

That's all the apple news for today.

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