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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Tuesday, October 15, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, U.S.D.A.

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One of the letters in the mailbag this week comes from a lady who is worried about her dog. She writes: "Does anyone know what makes dogs have running fits?"

Nutrition scientists at the Wisconsin Experiment Station have the answer. They have been investigating this common disease of dogs that also goes by the name of "canine hysteria" and "fright disease." And they report the cause as a lack in the dog's diet. The Wisconsin scientists find that dogs never have running fits when their food includes plenty of good-quality animal protein which has not been cooked with too much heat. So to prevent this trouble they advise feeding your dog home-prepared rations containing raw or rare meat, or else commercial dog food that has not been cooked with too much heat. They explain that cooking at too high a temperature causes the protein in meat to lose one of its natural acids. The lack of this acid is probably the cause of the dog's running fits.

Just to be sure they were right, the Wisconsin scientists kept some dogs on a diet of meat and wheat, cooked in dry heat at 392 degrees Fahrenheit. To a housewife 392 degrees Fahrenheit means only a moderately hot oven. Nevertheless, all the dogs fed on meat heated to this temperature developed running fits in from 8 to 18 days. Other dogs on the same ration with a little rare meat or milk added did not develop running fits.

Scientists in other laboratories have suspected that lack of vitamin B in the dog's ration might cause running fits. But the Wisconsin tests gave evidence to the contrary.

Now this question about dog rations let's turn to a question about human rations. A mother writes: "The more I read about vitamins, the more I wonder if my children would not be better off if I worried less about the food they eat and simply insisted they take vitamin tablets every day."

Nutrition scientists at the different State experiment stations agree in saying no to this idea. They say the best place for normal people to get their vitamins is off the dinner plate. Human beings have proved through the ages that they can be physically fit on natural food. They have not yet proved how well they can do on vitamin or mineral concentrates. These concentrates are new and scientists have much to learn about them.

Wisconsin scientists explain it this way. They say: "Concentrated preparations of vitamins, minerals, and what not may be very helpful when recommended by a physician, but they are not necessities when a diet is based on enough milk, eggs, meat, vegetables and fruit. These are the natural foods that have not been heated too much and treated and processed until you can hardly recognize them. The more processing foods have, the more you need to eat the natural protective foods along with them. And isn't it more pleasant as well as more scientific to eat a well-balanced diet of appetizing foods instead of dosing with tablets or concentrates?"

So much for tablets versus food. Now comes a question from a housewife who wonders if the green peas she canned early in the summer are beginning to spoil. She says: "I have just noticed that the liquid in the cans of peas is getting cloudy. My neighbor says cloudy liquid is a sign of spoilage. Please tell me how I can know whether these peas are spoiling."

Your nose will help you tell whether your peas are spoiling, suggests the Montana Experiment Station. If you find both cloudy liquid and a peculiar odor in your cans of peas, the trouble probably is spoilage. But liquid often becomes cloudy when the peas were mature and contained a good deal of starch. The cloudiness is the starch that has come out of the peas into the liquid.

Here's another letter from a mother. She says: "My youngsters like orangeades and orange-flavored drinks very much. I should like to know whether these beverages give the children the same vitamins they get from natural orange juice."

No, orangeade and orange-flavored drinks contain little of the natural vitamins found in pure orange juice. Tests at the Massachusetts Station showed that the vitamin C in many of these beverages was almost negligible. Vitamin C is the vitamin oranges are particularly rich in. Orange-flavored beverages often are pleasant, refreshing drinks, but they are no substitute for the juice of the fruit, no matter how good they taste and how much the children like them.

That clears the questions out of the mailbag today. More will be in on Thursday.