

## Importance Of Proper Food

By HERMAN N. BUNDESEN, M.D.  
THE more we learn of the body and its functions, the more clearly we see the importance of proper food to health. Give the body enough of the tools it needs in the form of proteins, vitamins, and minerals, and it will use them to build a state of robust health. Deprive it of these things and it not only fails to function as it should during the period of childhood, but may even suffer permanent damage which can never be made good.

This is particularly true of the liver, largest of the body's vital organs, and one of the most complex. During the recent research which has centered around this organ, it has been found that certain substances in every well-balanced diet play a significant role in keeping the liver healthy. They are called lipotropic factors because they aid in the body's use of fat.

### Amino Acids

Among these health-building lipotropic substances are choline, a part of that powerful bundle of vitamins known as the B-complex and the amino acid called methionine. The amino acids are the building block of the protein found principally and abundantly in such foods as meat, milk and eggs.

When a diet which does not contain enough of these lipotropic factors is given to animals, a great amount of fat is deposited in the liver with the gradual formation of non-functioning seat tissue in place of working liver cells. Ultimately, large areas of the liver are hardened in this way and the condition known as cirrhosis is produced. Not only can these changes be brought about in animals by withholding choline and methionine, but the first step in this process which is the deposit of fat in the liver can be reversed by adding them once again to the diet. Naturally, these factors already formed will remain permanently, but the giving of choline and methionine will cause a rapid disappearance of fat from the liver and a regeneration of cells which have been injured rather than killed.

### Liver Damage

A number of other observations seem to show the relation between the absence of these lipotropic factors and the development of liver damage.

For example, in such countries as India, Syria and China, where the diet is poor in vitamins and protein, a great deal of cirrhosis develops. In certain areas in South Africa, the natives live, for the most part, on starchy foods, principally ground meal, and only very small amounts of milk. Meat is rarely eaten. Thus, the diet of these natives is greatly deficient in protein and vitamins. In these people, it has been found that cirrhosis of the liver was present in four out of five of the men who died and were examined after death.

There has also been some suggestion that liver damage may be due to the use of alcoholic beverages, but it has not been possible to show that alcoholism by itself can produce cirrhosis of the liver. It is likely that a food deficiency develops because such people are too busy drinking beer. Modern research indicates that too little food rather than too much drink is the basic cause of the liver damage so often found among alcoholics.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**  
**J. B.**: If a child has an enlarged heart, can it be brought back to normal?

**Answer:** It is not likely that the enlarged heart can be brought back to normal. However, with proper care, strain on the heart can be prevented so that further enlargement will not occur.

**A. L.**: Due to arthritis, I have been unable to walk for two years. My knees have become stiff and I cannot straighten out my legs. What do you advise?

**Answer:** It is possible that with operative treatment the knees can be straightened.

An orthopedic specialist should be consulted concerning this matter.

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