

# Poor eating affects brain

by George Meinig, D.D.S.

Dear Dr. Meinig:

Los Angeles Times had a front page story on the mental health problems in this country. They said 20 to 32 million Americans need some kind of mental health care.

The part that startled me was their statement that over eight million school-age children needed help for psychological disorders.

I'm in agreement with your past statements about the huge backlog of degenerative diseases being related to the poor diet habits of people. However, I have never related mental health to nutrition. Can anything be done to at least help all these children?

S.C.

DEAR S.C.: It is unfortunate so much attention has been paid to solving all other diseases and so little to mental health. Our intense preoccupation with identifying germs as a cause of illness has been unfortunate. Instead the search should have been directed to finding why tissue changes occur that permit germs to find us so delicious. Limiting our thinking to the germ theory narrowed perception and wasted years and years of learning about the true cause of disease.

Reams of evidence exists of scientific work on animals and people that show poor feeding is the first thing that upsets normal mental activity. How strange the statement should even have to be made. It must be obvious to all that hunger in itself makes us cranky and irritable in but a few hours. What then does a lifetime diet of junk foods, heavily laden with calories and grossly deficient in vitamins, minerals and proteins do to our brain capacity?

Herein lies another example of the greatness of our body machine going along working, day after day, but at less than optimum. Creeping up on us all the while and often undetected are these mental deficiencies and body breakdowns. Somehow they just never seem to be connected with the fuel that feeds us.

The article you quote from is from a report by the President's Commission on Mental Health. Not only do 15% of our children

Dear Dr. Meinig: You nutritionists talk about good breakfasts and balanced meals. How can we know exactly what that means?

M.C.

Dear M.C.: You can't! Such statements assume some knowledge about nutrition that an individual may not possess.

Let's take the following breakfast which is considered by many to be a good one and compare it to a poor breakfast. Both have exactly the same number of calories; that is, 700:

## GOOD BREAKFAST

700 Calories

2 eggs  
3 Oz. ham  
1 slice whole grain  
bread and butter  
1 glass milk

## POOR BREAKFAST

700 Calories

3 hot cakes  
Butter and syrup  
1 cup coffee with  
cream and sugar

Now the startling fact is that the above good breakfast has the same number of calories but furnishes 104 times the quantities of various food nutrients than the poor breakfast:

5 x more protein

6 x more vitamin B2

7 x more calcium

2 x more vitamin B1

7 x more phosphorus

20 x more nicotinic acid

4 x more iodine

50 x more vitamin C

3 x more vitamin A

Incidentally, most nutritionists would not classify the above good breakfast as a good one. All the above kind of data may be obtained from food value charts. Should you be statistical or figure-oriented, you may check your own meal ingredients by obtaining these charts from the government. The figures above were taken from a series of excellent scientific articles presented to doctors by Michael J. Walsh.

In my opinion people who eat properly do not have to count calories. One never sees an animal living on natural foods that is obese. No, don't count calories but do make every calorie count.

suffer mental problems but 25% of the total population suffer depression or anxiety from emotional stress. Of this total, two million were diagnosed schizophrenic and 1% suffer profound depression.

Incidentally, one recent study of schizophrenics has shown that 70% of them are due to allergies. Withdrawal of the food or substance that caused the allergy stopped the mental derangement promptly and return of the allergen caused return of the symptoms.

The article you read was the result of a press conference by our First Lady Rosalynn Carter. As honorary chairman she is attempting to acquaint the public with the seriousness of the situation. Mrs. Carter said, "The discrimination that persists against mental illness is a

national disgrace. It's deep and it's based on myths and misinformation."

Nutritionally, all factors of a good dietary are involved in mental illness. Particularly the vitamins B, C, folic acid; minerals, calcium, magnesium; and proteins lysine, glutamic acid, and threonine are of major consequence. Your question is a most important one to the future of our country. So little can be said in a short article. I strongly recommend you purchase Dr. E. Cheraskin's book, "Psychodietics" as it covers this subject with great clarity. He is one of the world's most prolific nutrition researchers, having published over 300 scientific articles and 13 books. This work, for the public, is available in paperback. It is easy reading despite it's formidable title.