

Your good health needs more than rice

Special to the News

Dear Dr. Meinig:

The use of white rice or brown rice in the diet seems to be controversial. If brown rice is supposed to be so good for us, how come Orientals and most people eat white rice? Orientals seem to look pretty good to me.

— H.O.

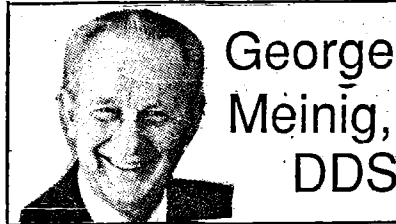
Dear H.O.:

Polished rice, that is, white rice has had a notable history of sustaining life as a staple food for millions of Orientals. However, when not accompanied by sufficient amounts of other foods, the quality of life provided by white rice is quite poor.

Historically, milled rice became popular because it keeps much better in tropical, humid climates than does regular brown rice.

In time, its white color became so familiar and customary that its white appearance was looked upon as being better than brown. By the same token those that use non-polished rice for short periods soon find its light tan color just as attractive.

For centuries, many of those



who depend almost wholly on white rice for their diets became ill with the disease called beriberi. In 1897, a Dutch physician observed that chickens fed polished rice developed polyneuritis, a disease which closely resembles beriberi. In time, the cause of the illnesses of humans and fowl were found to be the high loss of vitamin B₁ that occurred to the rice during milling.

This was the first discovery that a diet containing too little of a vitamin could cause a deficiency disease.

In 500 B.C. Confucius considered rice to be an appropriate food for virtuous and graceful life. But during his time it was the more nutritious brown rice that was eaten.

Later, when it was found that milled white rice kept for longer periods, its use became universal.

For those whose diets were almost exclusively white rice, the number of deaths from beriberi were enormous because doctors had no knowledge of how simple it was to prevent its occurrence. As late as 1925 in Japan alone, it is said that there were 15,000 deaths due to beriberi.

Although the major cause of this disease was the low amount of vitamin B₁ in the diet, actually the milling caused a loss of about two-thirds of the other vitamins and minerals contained in brown rice.

Just try to imagine for all those that died from beriberi, the scores that lived in a malnourished state with bodies that were just barely functioning.

Even today, the significant loss of magnesium, iron, potassium, fiber, and other vitamins that occurs in making white rice is responsible for many other deficiency diseases. If white rice isn't a prominent part of your diet, don't be too pleased because the white flour products and cereals which are eaten in large amounts in this country suffer relatively the same kind of vitamin/mineral loss during milling as does rice.

During World War II, the government forced food manufacturers to fortify these products because so many of our young men couldn't pass the easy physical. However, what is added in no way makes up for the total number of nutrients lost during the processing procedure.

While history shows us that millions of people were able to exist on white rice, had they used brown rice, it, in itself, would not have provided all the nutrients our

bodies need.

The point of all this is that even though rice and other grains sustain people for long periods, their use still results in serious malnutrition unless sufficient amounts of other foods that contain the missing nutrients are included in the diet.

It is the subtle absence of the essential nutrients over a period of time that proves to be the cause of most of our degenerative diseases. In the 19th century, Louis Pasteur claimed bacteria to be the cause of disease. Few know that Dr. Antoine Béchamp, also a French physician living at the same time, claimed that **bacteria were not the cause of disease but the result of it.** Because Pasteur was a better self-promoter, and because the real reasons are more elusive, his views became the views of doctors and the public and, though gradually changing, they still prevail.

May I encourage you to dwell upon these thoughts. It takes awhile for such well-established beliefs to be put in perspective.

We are not going to learn how to control most of the degenerative diseases until our people see how the foods they now eat and don't eat are the main contributing factors to their health problems.

It is an alert and informed public that, over the years, has changed the course of medical practice.

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Everyone has a question about nutrition. Send yours to Dr. George E. Meinig, c/o Ojai Valley News, Box 277, Ojai, CA 93024.

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