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(REVISED)

FOOD FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD

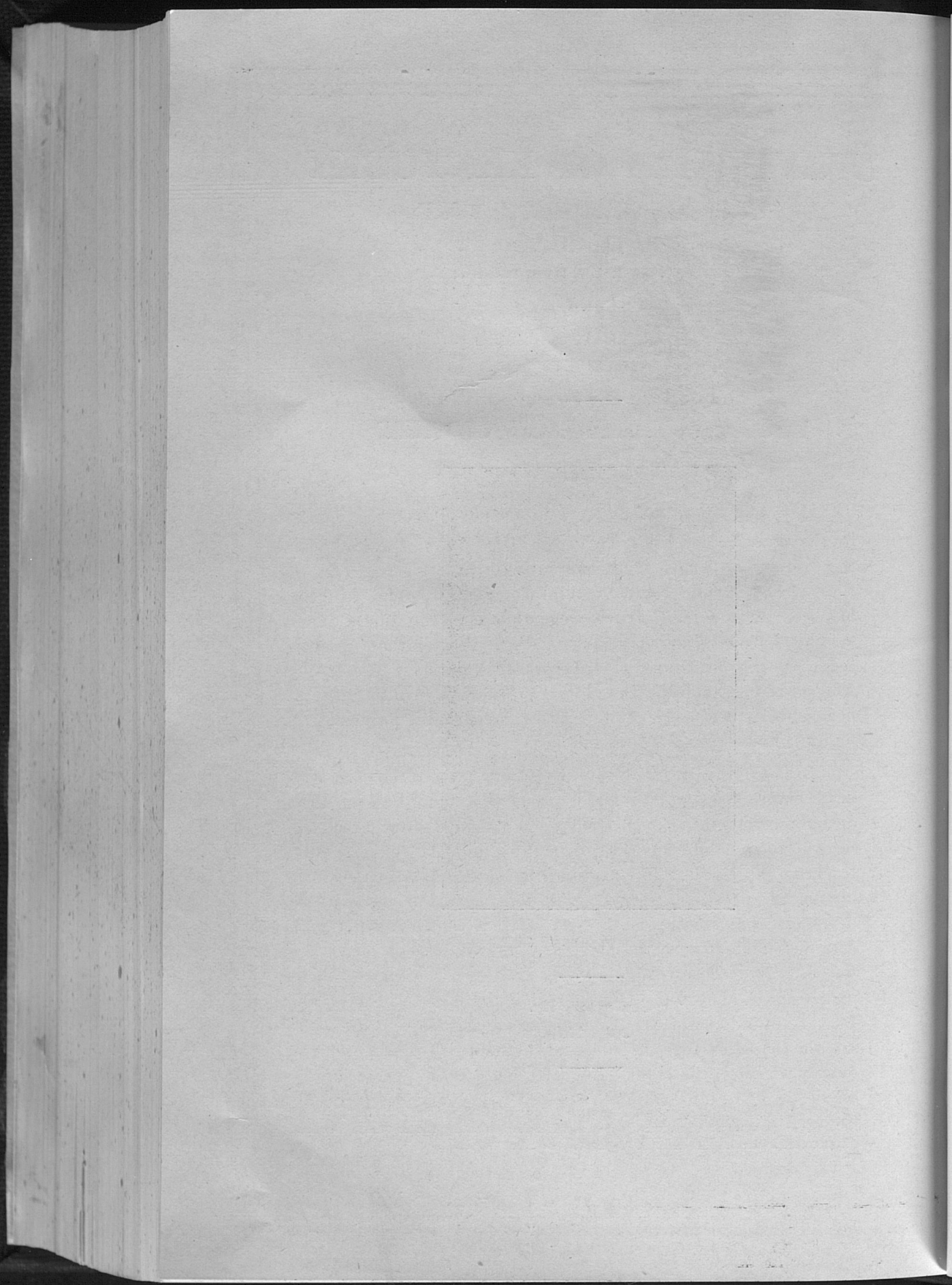


A Healthy, Happy Child

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CIRCULAR NO. 225

(REVISED)

Food for the Preschool Child

By FLORENCE IMLAY

It is important that good food habits are well established by the time the child is from two to three years of age. This is the transition period from babyhood into active life and the time when the child begins to think for himself. The child who has been given cereals, gruels, vegetable and fruit juices during babyhood usually will have acquired a liking for these essential foods by the beginning of the preschool period. The mother who postpones training the child in good food habits until this period will meet serious difficulties in introducing new food textures and flavors into his diet.

Because he is growing rapidly, at this period, the child must have ample food in the right proportion, and because he is developing mentally and socially, his attitude toward food and toward food habits must be carefully guided. The process of teaching the child to like all essential foods must be continued during the preschool period, or until he learns to eat all foods necessary for growth and health. Care must be taken that he eats sufficient food to build hard bones and teeth, make firm muscles, give energy for activities and keep the body growing and in good condition. However, it must be kept in mind that food is only one of the factors which influence growth and health. Besides food he must have plenty of sleep and rest, long hours of outdoor play, good hygienic habits, calm environment, be kept in a happy frame of mind and be physically sound.

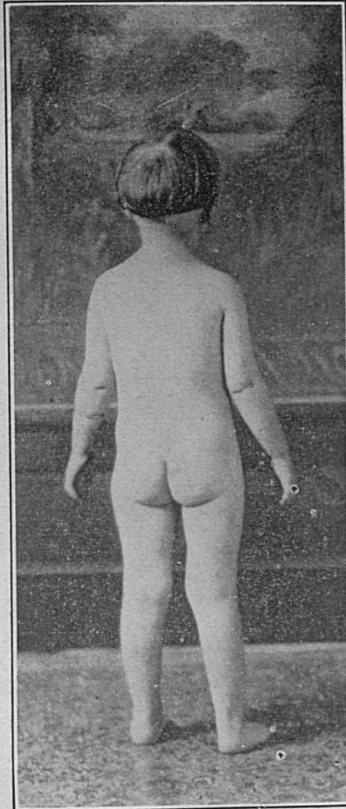
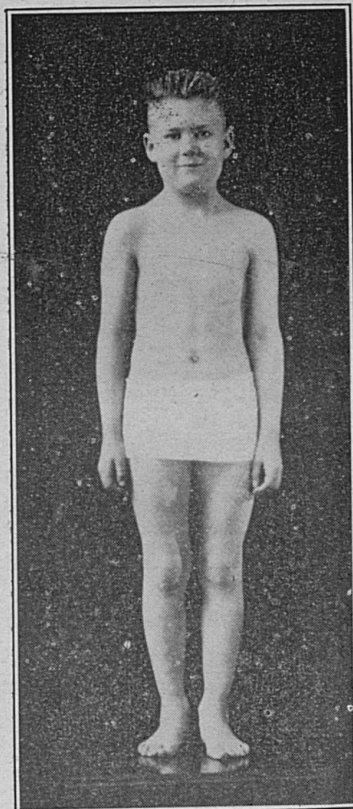
Every mother should have a mental picture of a healthy child and should be constantly on the alert for signs indicating that he is not developing properly or is becoming under-nourished.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A WELL-NOURISHED CHILD

1. Facial expression—Alert, bright, and happy when in repose.
2. Eyes—Clear and bright. No dark circles nor puffiness underneath.
3. Skin—Clear, smooth and slightly moist.
4. Color—Cheeks rosy-tinted (not a brilliant red); the lips, ear lobes, finger nails and the lining of the eyelids and mouth should be pink. The skin of the body should have a clear, pinkish glow and be free from mottling or brownish spots.
5. Hair—Smooth and glossy.
6. Mouth—Closed.
7. Teeth—Evenly enameled, no cavities, clean. Gums firm.
8. Bony framework—Back straight with a slight lumbar curve; shoulders flat; legs straight; chest broad and slightly rounded; joints, no enlargements.
9. Posture—Head erect, chest up, shoulders flat, abdomen in, weight on the balls of the feet.
10. Muscles—Firm.
11. Bones—Well padded with muscle and fat.
12. Weight—Normal weight for age and height, gaining about one-half pound a month.
13. Disposition—Calm and happy. Beginning to adjust himself to situations without becoming irritated. Does not have tantrums.
14. Appetite—Eats all foods essential for health and is eager for food at meal time.
15. Sleep—Goes to sleep quickly. Sleeps 12 hours at night and has a nap in the afternoon.

During the preschool period, when the child is growing rapidly he should have a physical examination, by a competent physician, every six months, to be sure that he is developing properly. However, the parents should be constantly watching for such signs as lack of appetite, sleeplessness, poor color or bad skin, nervousness, irritability, or a failure to gain, any one of which may indicate something wrong with the child physically or with his food or his hygienic habits.

WELL DEVELOPED CHILDREN
PRODUCTS OF SLEEP AND REST
EXERCISE AND PLAY
FRESH AIR AND SUNSHINE
CORRECTION OF PHYSICAL DEFECTS AND
BALANCED DIET

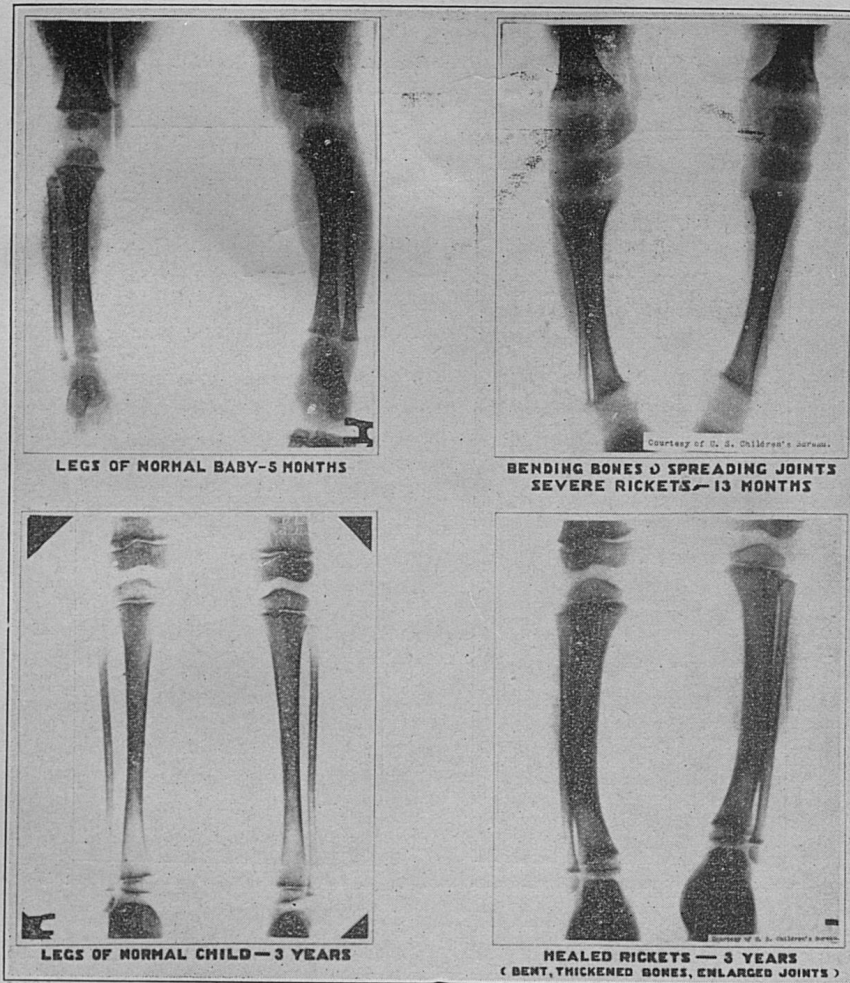


COURTESY OF THE EXTENSION SERVICE, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOODS A CHILD SHOULD EAT

Milk. Milk is the most important article of food in the child's diet, and the only practical source from which sufficient calcium (lime) can be obtained to build hard bones and teeth. One quart of milk daily will supply the calcium required. The proteins of milk are of excellent quality and a quart will supply from one-half to two-thirds of the child's needs. Milk is also a source of phosphorus, vitamin A and vitamin B. The serious results of an insufficient amount of milk in the child's diet are illustrated in Figure 2. One of the causes of rickets is too little calcium.

FOOD HELPED MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



(FROM THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU, U. S. DEPT. OF LABOR)

X-RAYS SHOW HOW AN UNBALANCED DIET MAY DEFORM THE BONES OF GROWING CHILDREN

Vegetables. All vegetables, unless they are very stringy, can be eaten during the preschool age. At least two vegetables besides potatoes should be served daily, and green leaf vegetables such as spinach, turnip tops, etc., should be served at least three times a week. The two-year-old child can eat tender

lettuce leaves, and children beyond three can eat lettuce, grated raw carrot and the tender parts of raw cabbage. Cooked tomatoes may be substituted for raw vegetables, since the vitamin C in them is not destroyed by cooking.

Fruits. Orange or tomato juice should be served daily because of their anti-scorbutic value. A second fruit such as apple sauce, baked apples, stewed prunes, apricots, peaches, pears and pineapple should be served daily, for their laxative qualities, mineral and vitamin content. Fruit with large seeds such as grapes should not be served until children are older.

Cereals. A well-cooked whole cereal should be served daily, either as a breakfast or supper dish. Cereals are an important feature of the diet, because of their mineral content and laxative qualities.

Bread. Stale bread, at least one day old, or well dried toast is the best kind for children. Whole wheat bread is preferable to white bread because of its mineral content and laxative qualities.

Eggs. One egg should be served daily, since the yolk is one of the best sources of iron. If the child cannot eat the white of egg, the yolk should be served separately.

Meat. During the preschool age, children may eat about one tablespoonful of finely chopped meat, three times a week. Chicken, beef, liver, lamb and boneless fish are the best kinds to serve. Bacon (crisp) and the tenderloin are the only cuts of pork which children of this age should eat.

Fat. Children's food should not be rich in fat because of the difficulty of digesting it. The fat should be served in the form of butter on bread, butter or bacon fat on vegetables, and thin cream on cereals, rather than in rich gravies, sauces, pastries and meat.

Sweets. Sweets should be mostly in the form of simple desserts such as stewed fruits, custards, blancmange, fruit gelatins, sponge cake, plain cookies and plain ice creams. Children of the preschool age should not have more than two tablespoons of sugar a day, including that in cooked foods. It should be remembered that sugar in itself is a good food, but

that too much of it causes digestive disturbances, constipation and loss of appetite. However, sugar does have a delightful flavor which most persons like, and when all sweets are kept from children it frequently means that an abnormal desire for sweets is developed later.

Water. A child should drink four cups of water daily.

Cod Liver Oil. The ultraviolet ray of sunshine is essential for good bone development. This particular ray does not go thru ordinary window glass, nor to any great extent thru clothing. Therefore, it is advantageous for children to have a substitute for the ultraviolet ray of sunshine during the winter. Cod liver oil has been found to contain a vitamin which acts similarly to sunshine and should be included in the diet of growing boys and girls during the winter. Usually two teaspoons per day of cod liver oil tested for vitamin D is considered sufficient to protect a growing child from poor bone development. However, the dosage for particular children should be given under the direction of a physician or nutritionist as occasionally a child needs more or cannot take so much as two teaspoons. Viosterol has a greater potency than ordinary cod liver oil and should be given under the advice of a physician or nutritionist.

FOOD GUIDE FOR PLANNING CHILDREN'S MEALS

To be served daily	Foods to be avoided
Milk—4 cups	Coarse, stringy vegetables.
Vegetables—2 servings besides potatoes	Fruits with large seeds, such as grapes.
Fruits—orange or tomato juice	Fresh breads.
a second fruit slightly sweetened	Fried foods.
Cereal—at least one serving of whole cereal	Highly seasoned foods.
Bread—at least 24 hours old	Rich pastries
Egg—1 daily	Large quantities of sweets
Cod liver oil—daily during winter.	Pickles, relishes.

Note: Meat may be served about three times a week.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF FOODS

Milk. Part of the daily allowance of milk may be used in such foods as creamed soups, such as potato, carrot, spinach, squash and tomato soups, and creamed vegetables, custard, blancmange, tapioca or rice puddings and ice cream.

Vegetables. Vegetables are valuable for their mineral content, especially the green, leafy ones, which contain iron. For this reason they should be prepared by methods which conserve the mineral substances contained in them. This may be done by baking, steaming or cooking in a small amount of water and using at least some of the liquid in making soups and sauces.

It is best to serve vegetables to children either buttered or creamed. Two tablespoons of butter (bacon fat may be substituted) to a quart of vegetables is a good proportion of fat. Fried foods should never be served to children because they are hard to digest. Young children have not formed the habit of masticating their food well, and for that reason vegetables should be mashed or finely chopped.

Fruit. Fruits should be cooked with little or no sugar, in order to keep their laxative qualities. The ones cooked with the skins, such as prunes or dried apricots, should be finely chopped as the child is apt not to chew the skin well. Both cooked prunes and cooked dried apricots may be put thru the food chopper. If prunes are soaked over night and simmered for about three hours, they will need no sugar to make them palatable.

Cereals. These should be cooked thoroly in a double boiler. Variety and palatability may be given to cereals by the addition of chopped raisins, dates or figs while cooking, or by serving them with sliced peaches or apricots.

Eggs. Eggs should be cooked below boiling point in order that the white may be soft and tender. They may be served to children in a variety of ways, such as poached, soft boiled, creamed, coddled, or in an omelet, but never fried.

Meat. Meats are hard to chew and should be chopped before cooking or cut very fine after cooking. They may be

roasted, broiled, made into stews or creamed, but never fried. Bacon should be crisp but not hard.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ESTABLISHING GOOD FOOD HABITS

1. Be sure that the child is in good physical condition.
2. See that he is rested and calm at meal time.
3. Serve meals at regular hours and about five hours apart.
4. Do not allow eating between meals.
5. Modify flavor of disliked food by using in soups, creamed dishes, or in combination with other foods, sandwiches, etc.
6. Serve only one food which is disliked at a meal.
7. Always serve a food of which the child is very fond with one which he dislikes.
8. Serve disliked foods frequently and in new ways.
9. Create an interest in the food, by allowing the child to help prepare the dish, plan the menu, have his own garden or assist with the marketing.
10. Serve foods attractively by using colorful dishes and table decorations.
11. Set a good example, by eating the foods you want your child to eat.
12. Do not nag at the child, or keep suggesting that he eat.
13. Do not make a game of his eating.
14. Do not allow him to dawdle over his meal. Thirty to forty-five minutes is ample time for his meal. A child with a good appetite will finish a meal in twenty minutes.
15. Do not mention your own or your child's dislikes before him.
16. Speak in positive terms, when discussing the child's food habits before him.

RECIPES

Spinach Soup

2 c. thin white sauce ½ tsp. salt
1 c. cooked spinach

Cut up spinach, bring to boiling point, strain. Combine with hot white sauce, season, reheat and serve.

All other greens, such as mustard, turnip tops, etc., may be used in the same way.

Thin White Sauce

2 c. milk 4 tb. butter
2 tb. flour

Scald milk. Melt fat. Add flour and blend. Add milk gradually, stirring until sauce is smooth. Bring to boiling point.

Buttered Beets

2 c. cooked beets 1 tb. butter

Wash and cook beets in boiling salted water until tender. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ tablespoon salt per quart of water used. Peel and chop fine. Add butter and serve.

All vegetables may be served this way. Carrots, asparagus, spinach and other greens, string beans and squash are particularly good served with butter. Bacon fat may be substituted for butter.

Creamed Carrots

2 c. cooked carrots 2 tb. butter
1 c. milk $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

Wash, scrape and cook carrots in boiling salted water. (They may be cooked in skins and then peeled.) Make a white sauce of butter, flour, milk and salt, using directions given for thin white sauce. Add carrots and serve.

Stuffed Potatoes

6 medium-sized potatoes 2 tb. butter
 $\frac{3}{4}$ c. hot milk $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

Bake potatoes until thoroly done. Cut a slice off the top of each, scrape out centers, being careful not to break the shells. Mash potatoes, add hot milk, butter and salt. (More milk may be needed.) Beet until creamy and pile in shells. Place in hot oven and reheat.

Poached Eggs on Toast

Fill a shallow pan with water deep enough to cover eggs. For each pint of water add $\frac{1}{2}$ t. salt. Have the water boiling, then lower heat. Break each egg separately into a saucer and carefully slip it into the water. Cover the pan and heat so the water does not boil. Let stand until the white is coagulated and a film covers the yolk. Take up with a greased skimmer, drain and place on slices of toast moistened slightly with hot water.

Creamy Eggs

6 eggs 6 tb. milk
1 tb. butter $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt

Beat eggs slightly, add milk, butter and salt. Put into top of double boiler. Stir constantly and cook until a creamy texture. (In

stirring be careful to scrape the cooked egg from bottom and sides of the pan.) Serve at once or they will become hard and dry.

Creamed Liver

1 lb. liver	4 tb. flour
2 c. milk	$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt.
4 tb. butter	

Wash liver and put into boiling water. Reduce the heat and simmer until tender. Drain and chop very fine. Make a white sauce of other ingredients, combine mixtures and serve.

Meat Balls

2 c. ground round steak	1 egg
$\frac{3}{4}$ c. stale bread crumbs	1 tsp. salt
$\frac{1}{3}$ c. milk	

Soak bread in milk, add well-beaten egg, meat and salt. Form in small balls. Place on broiler and cook until thoroly done, turning frequently.

Tapioca Cream

1 qt. milk	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
$\frac{1}{3}$ c. minute tapioca	3 eggs
$\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar	1 tsp. flavoring

Scald milk in double boiler. Add minute tapioca, sugar and salt and cook 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Pour a little of the mixture slowly over slightly beaten egg yolks, stirring vigorously. Return to double boiler and cook until mixture begins to thicken like custard. Remove from heat. Fold in stiffly beaten egg white. Add flavor. Chill. Serve with whipped cream and a few berries or pieces of fruit.

Variations. $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of drained, diced fruit or fruit pulp may be added before chilling. Brown sugar may be used in place of white sugar.

Jellied Prunes

1 level tb. gelatin	1 c. sugar
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. prunes	4 tb. lemon juice
4 c. cold water	

Wash prunes, soak for several hours in $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups cold water and cook in same water until soft; remove prunes, stone and cut in

quarters. To the prune juice add enough water to make 2 cups and reheat. Soak gelatin in one-half cup cold water and dissolve in the hot liquid; add sugar and lemon juice. Strain, add prunes, and chill. Stir while cooling to prevent prunes from settling. Serve with soft custard sauce.

Soft Custard Sauce

2 c. scalded milk	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. sugar
2 eggs	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla	

Beat eggs, add sugar and hot milk. Cook in a double boiler, stirring constantly until mixture coats the spoon, then remove quickly from the fire, place dish in bowl of cold water to cool, add flavoring, salt and cool by beating.

Graham Cracker Pudding

2 c. milk	$\frac{3}{4}$ c. graham cracker crumbs
1 egg	8-10 dates
3 tb. brown sugar	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt

Beat egg slightly and add sugar, milk, cracker crumbs, dates and salt. Mix well and pour into custard cups. Place the cups in a pan of warm water and bake in a moderate oven until firm.

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