

## Weight and Health

HOW THE MILK SUPPLY CAN BE MADE SAFE

Written for the American Child Health Association  
BY  
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For our purposes good milk is milk to which nothing has been added, from which nothing has been taken without the knowledge of the consumer, and which contains no germs of disease. It will be seen the first condition protects against fraud and the second against production and distribution of disease through milk. It is very important to distinguish between the purposes of the two parts of the definition.

In order that these requirements will be met, laws and ordinances have been made. These in many cases are so very specific that they defeat the purpose for which they are enacted. In many instances real improvement in the available milk supply has been retarded.

Venice probably was the first city to attempt to regulate the milk supply, and this occurred because of an epidemic disease in milk-producing animals. From that time until the introduction of certified and pasteurized milk, regulations have concerned themselves principally with the prevention of fraud. In more recent years there has come a growing realization that, while watering or skimming milk, or in any way reducing its food value, is fraud or theft, still these practices are not injurious to health; whereas if cows are suffering from a disease which can be communicated to man through milk, if milk is handled by persons who have a contagious disease, or even have been in contact with a contagious disease, or if milk contains other germs in enormous numbers,—all these must be considered definite health problems.

Various kinds of laboratory tests, examinations of cows and of men who handle milk have been introduced to guard against carrying disease by milk, but unfortunately the results of the examinations usually come after the harmful milk has been consumed.

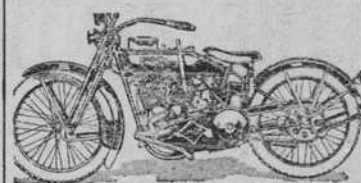
The improvements which have been made in recent years in the handling of milk are really remarkable. Today it is not difficult generally to produce milk which contains a very small number of bacteria, but with the utmost care it is difficult to prevent occasionally a large number. The really important thing is not the number but the kind of bacteria in the milk. A milk with a low bacterial count may be the means of spreading a communicable disease. Because it is impossible always to produce milk free from disease germs and be-

cause of our inability to detect in time these germs in the available milk supply, the method of heating milk to such a temperature as will kill them has been generally resorted to. In this country Caille, in 1888, introduced the method Soxhlet of sterilizing milk. This boiling of milk has marked disadvantages; among them, changing the taste and destroying the cream line. Heating milk to 140-145 degrees F. for twenty to thirty minutes (pasteurization) does not change the taste of milk, does not affect the cream line, and does destroy the germs producing disease.

Unfortunately pasteurization may deceive the consumer as regards cleanliness and age of milk. This has been the main drawback to universal pasteurization of milk. Certainly only milk carefully drawn, handled, and stored by men who are well, and from cows that are well should be admitted to the pasteurizing plants. The plants should be readily accessible and under the supervision of competent and honest officials. These conditions are being approached more nearly as time goes on and pasteurized milk is fast becoming the general milk supply of the civilized world.

Pasteurization destroys one of the vitamins; but scurvy can be easily avoided if the proper vitamins are furnished by the addition to the diet of orange, lemon, grape-fruit, or tomato juice. One of these juices should be part of the diet of every artificially-fed infant.

The benefits of pasteurization of milk are so great, as is actually shown by health statistics, and all the dietary disadvantages can be readily overcome by feeding orange or one of the other juices mentioned, that there can be no doubt that universal pasteurization of all milk is to be recommended and hoped for. In this I would even include certified milk, and I hope some day to have available certified milk properly pasteurized at the point of production. To say that the unscrupulous will by pasteurization



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distribute milk not carefully produced and stored, does not prove that raw milk may not also be produced and distributed by unscrupulous dealers.

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