

Sauerkraut, Pickles Shed Light on Old Mystery of Allergy

By DELOS SMITH
United Press Science Editor

New York—(U.P.)—Light has been thrown on a 90-year-old mystery in the chemistry of some human bodies. The light comes from sauerkraut and dill pickles. The mystery is why mere exposure to cold will raise hives on some bodies but not on most bodies.

Of course, everyone said, "allergy." But allergy to what? And how did cold set it off?

Drs. Richard D. Wiseman and Daniel K. Adler of Syracuse, N.Y., have now produced the tested proof that in the body of a certain 35-year-old baker the substance was acetic acid. The cold part still is unexplained.

That acid is in sauerkraut. Vinegar runs up to 12 per cent acetic acid, and vinegar is used in pickling.

Cold and Hives
Sometimes when the baker went out into cold weather he got hives on his head, face, ears, and hands, the parts of his body exposed to cold. Other times he didn't. Some times when he ate ice cream or drank cold drinks, his throat would swell. Other times nothing happened. This had been going on for four years. When intensively quizzed he dimly remembered that when it started he had been eating lots of sauerkraut.

But the doctors sensed the hot clue when a day came when he ate a dill pickle and an hour later had a cold drink, whereupon his throat felt as though it was closing.

Acetic Acid
The common ingredient of sauerkraut and dill pickles is acetic acid. The baker was put through a long series of tests. All demonstrated that his body chemistry was mis-using acetic acid.

Some of the tests were spectacular. If the baker had had acetic acid in his diet, an ice cube would produce hives wherever on his body it was pressed. Or ice cream would raise them inside his throat. But when acetic acid was eliminated, cold produced no effect.

The doctors couldn't explain what went on chemically inside the baker. They assumed that either acetic acid in the presence of cold combined with something else to form an allergy-exciting compound or that the cold set off a compound already formed.

As We Live

By ELIZABETH HURLOCK, PH.D.

Mother Should Urge Son To Get Professional Help

Some problems have to be handled with kid gloves or they are made worse.

(Q) "I have a married son and he has a boy of 11 years. My son has been drinking for quite a while and now his wife says he is drinking wine. Naturally, I think he is emotionally disturbed when he is drinking wine. His wife quarrels with him when he is in that condition so he leaves home. I am very worried about this as you never know what will happen when people drink too much. I am wondering what to do in a case like this and would like to have your opinion."

Dr. Hurlock
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N.J.W.

(A) Because your son is a grown man, you cannot, directly, do anything about his drinking. Indirectly, however, you can do a lot to help him and also to help his wife.

So long as your son limits his drinking to wine, that is not as serious as if he drank something stronger. On the other hand, it is serious enough because he can get drunk if he drinks enough wine and, furthermore, he could easily shift from wine to whiskey or gin.

Unquestionably, your son is emotionally disturbed and that is one of the causes of his drinking. Your daughter-in-law is not helping the situation by quarreling with him when he drinks. In fact, she is making a bad situation worse.

May Be Disturbed
Your son may be disturbed about his work, his financial condition, his home situation, or any one of a hundred other things. Most people who turn to drink and drink too much are emotionally disturbed. They use drink as an escape from the troubles that lead to their emotional disturbance.

It would be very helpful if you could persuade your son to consult a doctor, a minister, or a psychiatrist about his troubles. It would also be a great help to him if your daughter-in-law went to a marriage counselor and discussed the home situation. Your role in this matter should be to urge them to get professional help. Don't try to advise them about what to do to correct the drinking or they will accuse you of interfering in their affairs.

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Large Cougar Seen In Portland Hills

Portland—(U.P.)—A large cougar was reported in the hills skirting the northwest section of the city last night.

The large animal was seen Sunday night about 150 feet from the home of Edward Hicks, 442 N.W. Skyline Blvd. Hicks said he had spotted the animal tracks earlier in the day in a wooded region near the home.

State police are attempting to flush the animal from the woods today. Gun shots heard in the area last week led them to believe the cougar possibly had been wounded.

Stamps May Honor Blood Bank Program

Portland—(U.P.)—The suggestion of a Milwaukee, Ore., man may result in a series of special postage stamps commemorating the American Red Cross blood-bank program.

The idea came from Albert J. Plant, who has donated more than a gallon of blood to the program.

Sen. Richard L. Neuberger (D-Ore.) took up Plant's idea and has introduced a bill for the stamp issue in the U. S. Senate.

Two other countries—Finland and Yugoslavia—have honored their blood programs with stamps.

Plant also suggested to Neuberger that the stamps be sold first in Portland.

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