



# Personal Health

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## Poisons In Food, Water and Air

The widespread use of poisonous chemicals in the never-ending war of man against insects makes it inevitable that some of those poisons will find its way into food and drink. Arsenic and lead appear prominently in the list of chemicals used as pesticides and these like most other chemicals used for the purpose are poisonous to man.

Acute poisoning resulting from the eating of food which has been sprayed in the fields by poisonous chemicals is quite rare. It is difficult to determine just how much of the various poisons may be safely consumed in small quantities, year after year, but it is certain that considerable tolerance for these poisons exists.

Careful soaking and washing of vegetables undoubtedly removes a great deal of whatever poisonous substances may cling to the surface, and it is unthinkable that any food should be eaten without this preparation. The use of a brush to aid mechanical removal of impurities is a great advantage.

Some of the chemical compounds which may contaminate food are not soluble in water, and if not removed mechanically may cling to the food and be eaten. Such compounds can be made soluble by immersing the vegetable for a short time in a dilute acid solution followed by thorough rinsing. In the fear that a typographical error, or a misunderstanding may lead to difficulties in this connection, I shall refrain from mentioning the name of the acid or the strength to use. Your doctor will be glad to discuss the matter with you, no doubt.

New lead pipe has been indicted as the source of lead-poisoning from drinking water. Lead is not soluble in pure water but oxygen in the water may oxidize a new lead pipe which can lead to the formation of soluble compounds which are poisonous. There is little to fear from water flowing through regularly used, old lead pipes.

DDT may be poisonous to man, in sufficient quantity. This product has recently come into very wide use. DDT has been found in the milk of cattle which occupy barns sprayed with this substance to get rid of flies. At the present time, it is not regarded as good practice to use this insecticide around dairy cattle.

In some sections of the country, the presence of nitrates in well-water has led to poisoning. The outstanding symptom of this type of poisoning is cyanosis—blueness—of the lips and skin. Ordinary prudence would indicate the desirability of a water analysis on any new well.

A disease known as "trembles," or "milk-sickness" results from eating butter or drinking milk from cattle which have eaten snakeroot. This disease is limited largely to the environs of the Ohio river. It is a rare disease of late owing to diligence in spotting and removing the offending weed.

Oxalic acid is present in rhubarb and tobacco in substantial amounts. Poisoning from rhubarb leaves has been reported, but this is not to be feared in the ordinary use of the plant which is a healthful article of diet.

The presence of poisons in the air of industrial areas has received much attention of late, following one or two instances of widespread poisoning from this source. Very little is actually known as to the tolerance of people for this type of poisoning, but recently it was suggested by a noted scientist that the pouring of industrial fumes and poisons into the air boded evil for generations to come. The individual can exert care to avoid poisoning from accidental contamination of food and drink, but he is helpless to prevent poisoning from industrial fumes, unless he organizes and demands relief from this atrocious situation. Why should the production of any product be so important as to endanger the health of those not concerned in its manufacture?

### Questions and Answers.

#### Can Can Any Time.

Have been criticized severely for canning during my period. The notion that it affects the food sounds silly to me. (Mrs. H. H. W.)

Answer—It is silly.

#### Fallen Stomach.

Please send booklet on exercises to overcome fallen stomach. When X-rays show fallen stomach what else can be done besides wearing an uplift corset supporter? (A. J. A.)

Answer—Evidently some "clinic" racketeer is working you over. Watch this column for a talk on "fallen stomach," which may save you considerable needless anxiety and a simoleon or two.

#### Sanitarium or Sanatorium?

Friend released from tuberculosis sanitarium a few months ago. He still returns from time to time to take treatment. He has invited us to spend an evening with him. Would this involve any risk

of catching the disease from him? (Mrs. W. E.)

Answer—Even if the disease is not yet arrested, the education the patient received at the sanitarium probably made him safe to associate with. But if he returns at intervals to a sanitarium for treatment I advise you to be on guard.