FILE NAME: Newspaper & Magazine Articles (NMA)

DATE: 1952

DOC#: NMA116

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Chicago Daily Tribune - How to Keep Well

HOW TO KEEP WELL

By Dr Theodore R Van Dellen

To the limit of space, questions pertaining to the prevention of disease will be answered. Personal replies will be made when return stamped envelope is enclosed. Telephone inquiries not accepted. Dr. Van Dellen will not make diagnoses or prescribe for individual diseases.

HEAVY SMOKING AND LUNG CANCER

[Copyright: 1952: By The Chicago Tribune]

CANCER of the lung continues on the increase. It now is the second most common malignancy in males and in some institutions has passed cancer of the stomach, to take first place. But it has more optimistic side of the picture, more than 90 per cent of the cases can be diagnosed before it is too late and modern surgery has



proved most successful.

Altho the cause is not known, many theories have been advanced. Statistics are the most exact and logically so, because the disease is more prevalent in men and is on the rise, as is the consumption of tobacco. Absolute proof is lacking but many physicians are emphatic about smoking as the cause and offer evidence that is extremely convincing. Dr. Evarts A. Graham of St. Louis led the fight in this direction. Most of their conclusions stem from a study of the smoking habits of 684 persons with lung cancers. These patients came from all parts of the country and all social and economic classes.

Of the 605 male victims of the disease, 96.5 per cent had smoked more than one-half package of cigarets daily for more than 20 years. This compares with 7.3 per cent, or 43 men, in the same age group without lung cancer who had smoked as much as the men with cancer. The difference is not great but demonstrates the danger of making a statistical study of this kind because smoking is so prevalent in this country. On the other hand, the figures become a little more convincing when more than a pack a day has been used for at least 20 years. Of the cancer group, 51.2 per cent fell into this category compared with 19.1 per cent of the controls. But not every one with cancer was a smoker; 2 per cent admitted complete abstinence and 4.5 per cent smoked less than a half pack a day. No attempt was made to classify the victims as to pipe, cigar, and cigaret smoking.

Women do not smoke as much as men and it often is stated that this is the reason why cancer of the lung is more common in men. Numerous studies along this line have given inconclusive results. There is no agreement on the ratio of men to women smokers, or men to women cancer victims. Graham concludes, however, that a correlation seems to exist between heavy smoking over a long period and cancer of the lung. The answer will not be forthcoming until it becomes possible to produce cancer experimentally from some or all of the products contained in cigaret smoke. Meanwhile the problem remains an individual one and each person must be his own judge.

Other irritants also have been incriminated but without proof. These include industrial dusts from chromates, asbestos, tar, radioactive gases and dusts, nickel, and many others. Gasoline and oil fires have the same category. The bronchitis associated with the influenza pandemic of 1917-18 has been entered as a contender. This is understandable because the epidemic has been blamed for every other human ailment so why not lung cancer? Ample studies have disproved this belief; the age group and the sex ratio are not in keeping with the contention.

For the time being, it is wise for all of us to be on the lookout for the disease. X-ray is in order whenever an unusual cough develops. Any persistent pain in the chest that fails to disappear within a reasonable length of time. The same can be said when blood appears in the sputum or unexplained fever exists.

MOMENTARY: The mighty mite causes intolerable itching.

FLUORIDATED WATER

B. T. writes: Is it safe for a growing up to drink water to which fluoride has been added to prevent cavity in children's teeth?

REPLY

Yes, provided the usual concentration of the chemical is not exceeded.

ENLARGED HEART

M. S. writes: Is any operation possible for an enlarged heart? My father has this condition.

REPLY

I doubt it. But why not ask your father's physician whether the condition causing the enlargement can be changed thru surgery.

STONE SQUATTERS

N. L. writes: Could a person go thru life with gallstones without having to be operated on?

REPLY

Yes, and many persons do. Autopsy studies have revealed the presence of gallstones in many individuals who were unaware of the condition.

ARTHRITIS AND DIARRHEA

L. Z. writes: Are frequent attacks of diarrhea common in arthritis?

REPLY

No, but certain anti-arthritic medications may cause diarrhea.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.