
THE CARE AND FEEDING OF HUSBANDS

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A. B. You know, it seems to me that children have had all the best of it from the angle of scientific advice and instruction to mothers on care and feeding, but I've been wondering why you don't do a little advising on the care and feeding of husbands. After all, the husband is pretty important to the family, and so far as I have observed, he doesn't rate too high when it comes to the matter of feeding him with something of the same care expended on the children. I'll wager that more than one big business deal has fallen down and a lot of promotions gone by the board just because some man wasn't feeling up to par. This makes me think there's something in this feeding business. What do you think of the idea?

E. L. B. I think it's good. It is true, as you say, that many a child is already benefiting by what his mother has learned about his nutritional needs. I believe a husband, too, would profit if his wife studied and applied a right system of care and feeding for him.

A. B. But perhaps he wouldn't like it. Men hate to be fussed about, don't you think?

E. L. B. She would need to be diplomatic, perhaps, but she shouldn't and needn't do much talking about it.

A. B. You agree with me, don't you, on the point about jobs and business deals and men feeling low because of wrong food or food eaten under wrong conditions?

E. L. B. Yes, I do, and as you say, husbands are important, and in more than an economic way. Speaking of economics, I don't believe people realize the economic effect of illness on the business of life, nor that much loss from illness comes because the lives of so many men don't consistently provide for proper food and rest as well as recreation and exercise.

A. B. Well, I think a wife can see to it that her husband is fed right, at the same time making him want to eat the food that's best for him—through paying plenty of attention to the appetite appeal, setting the stage right, you know, and making the food not only correct from the standpoint of nutrition, but so colorful and enticing that he won't rebel because he thinks he's getting only what's good for him. However, he shouldn't know too much about that. It would queer the whole thing.

E. L. B. Yes, the wife can see that her husband gets sufficient food of the right kind, and enough relaxation and peace in the home so that he will look forward to his meals, no matter what food prejudices he may have.

A. B. This interests me more and more. But what I want to know is how she will do it. I'm looking for a sort of bill of particulars. It's well enough to say, "Right food and enough of it," but what food, and why?

E. L. B. That isn't so hard to answer. If she serves well planned meals, tempting to the eye and also good to eat, she can adapt her menus to his special needs. For instance, if he is too thin, he needs starches, fats and sugars along with the vegetables, milk and fruits. Or, if he is too fat, she can help him cut down on the non-essential, fat-forming foods, at the same time seeing that he gets plenty of vegetables, milk and fruits, which spell minerals and vitamins, and which are necessary to a man as well as to a child if he is to function perfectly—both physically and mentally.

A. B. Men who eat away from home a good deal would soon undo all this good work, wouldn't they—unless they cooperated on the right diet scheme with their wives?

E. L. B. Yes, but this handicap could be overcome if the husbands were interested enough to find out what they ought to eat, and also if wives made an effort to find out what kind of meals their husbands got elsewhere. Then they could plan more intelligently, so that home meals would make up for deficiencies without taking away everything men like and want to eat.

A. B. This is fine, but you haven't given me a very good brief yet.

E. L. B. You want to know what the husband should eat, and I can tell you in a general way, even though the physical characteristics of the individual have to be taken into account. Sometime during the day he should have a pint of milk. It may be taken on cereal, as a beverage, or in milk soups or desserts. Most any food that includes milk could account for that pint. He should have two servings of fruit a day, too, and one of these ought to be orange juice or grapefruit or tomato juice, but this is easy, for every one likes one of these for breakfast, anyway. The other fruit serving may be had at any meal and in any liked way.

A. B. He'll want fruit if his wife does right by it. Fruit juices, cold and fresh, with their faint bouquet, can be made lovely in crystal and clear glass. And there are a thousand ways to make fruits so beautiful and so good that I can't imagine any man turning them down.

E. L. B. Then you know how we are always talking about vegetables. And really they are about as important as anything. If I were to give you a rule to go by, I'd say two good servings of vegetables besides potatoes every day is first-rate advice. Under most circumstances it is better to have servings of two different vegetables, but this is not necessary. However, you will approve of this—a variety from day to day should be provided. A green salad every day is, of course, desirable, and green leaf vegetables like spinach have an important place.

A. B. You are getting good now, and I think of another question. Supposing that wives attend to all this, how can one go about building up or shading down, be her husband too thin or inclined to an attention-compelling waistline?

E. L. B. If he weighs about what he should, a wife knows that he is getting the amount of fat-forming foods he ought to have, and that if she is providing the fruits and vegetables and a pint of milk a day, she needn't worry over the fat-forming foods such as bread, cereals, fats and sweets. But if he is too thin, she must try to increase the amounts of these foods, and try to get more

rest for him as well. Here she can serve breads and desserts, cream and well-buttered vegetables, and have a clear conscience. But if there is a tendency to overweight, what she has to look out for is exactly the opposite. She really doesn't have to serve bread at every meal. She should see that vegetables aren't too liberally buttered, and as for rich sauces, gravies and starchy foods, they are distinctly out of it. He will need one serving of protein food, such as eggs, meat or cheese every day, but she can make sure it is lean instead of fat meat or cottage cheese instead of the "full cream" varieties. She can have fruits and leave out sweets for desserts and serve plenty of celery, lettuce and crisp greens, which are bulky but not fattening, and go a long way toward helping out the meal in this case.

A. B. A good working plan, if you ask me—and you know I think that all the things you've been talking about can be made just as good and just as attractive as the most highly evolved rich food. You know my favorite theory, that this food and feeding game is largely a matter of seasoning, flavoring, good cooking and beautiful appearance, and with this in mind I think any woman can feed her husband rightly without a protest from him—particularly if he didn't know it was being done.

E. L. B. But there is more to the subject than just food. The matter of rest and relaxation comes in here, and the question of sleep and recreation. All these are involved in the care—not to mention the feeding—of husbands!

A. B. Oh, well, I have written reams about the leisurely meal, the diversion of conversation, the making of the meal-time a pleasure-haunted memory, and if that is what you mean, I'm for it.

E. L. B. Exactly what I mean. And for the man who comes home tired, a chance to rest and relax even for a few minutes before dinner will prepare him to enjoy the pleasant meal-time you have outlined. This is not usually difficult to accomplish at dinner. But sometimes breakfast is a hard proposition. A leisurely breakfast schedule is much to be desired, and any wife who can manage to get both her family and her breakfast to the table early enough to avoid the usual hurried meal and dash to the train is a real help to her husband.

A. B. One thing you haven't spoken of, but I'm going to. It always seemed to me that the last place to bring up a little matter of bills, unpleasant news, bickering and fussing about this and that, was at the table. So I'm for fun at meals, and no bills!

E. L. B. You are right about this. A pleasant atmosphere not only helps digestion but the disposition, too, and does a great deal toward maintaining morale, both physically and mentally. That is an accepted fact.

A. B. I suppose sleep—just to jog your memory about what you said was an important consideration—is pretty well dependent on the individual, isn't it?

E. L. B. Well, people do differ somewhat, but, in general, eight hours sleep for husbands—and for wives, too. Perhaps the husband may not think he needs it. But it is a good rule, just the same. Eight hours of sleep, and what a difference it makes! So, with the right food, recreation, rest, pleasant leisure, exercise—if the husband and father has these, he has a tremendous advantage.

A. B. He ought to. But before you and I continue this discourse, let's see what's in the refrigerator. And let's go out in the garden. I thought I heard a mocking-bird.