

Research Discredits Common Cold Myths

PLEASANTVILLE, N.Y. — Though the common cold has been around for ages, most people know surprisingly little about what really causes, spreads, prevents and cures our number one infectious illness, according to the "Reader's Digest."

For example, as long as anyone

can remember, mothers have been warning their children to "bundle up or you'll catch your death." Researchers have proved otherwise. Healthy volunteers — some fully clothed and some clad only in underwear — were inoculated with cold virus and then exposed to frigid temperatures for several hours. The two groups showed no

difference in the number or severity of colds.

Similarly, many people think air conditioning increases their susceptibility to colds. However, the real culprit may be the low relative humidity, not the low temperature, or refrigerated air.

Physicians can be as wrong as mothers. Many doctors have long believed that colds spread when healthy people inhale virus particles coughed or sneezed by cold sufferers. Now research suggests that hand-to-hand contact is a more important mode of transmission. When cold sufferers touch or blow their noses, they transfer live virus particles to their hands. The virus may be then deposited on whatever surfaces they touch — from telephones to

doorknobs. Healthy people literally pick up the virus with their hands and infect themselves by touching their noses or eyes.

What about kissing? In a study, Dr. Elliot C. Dick, professor of preventive medicine at the University of Wisconsin Medical School in Madison, had a group of healthy volunteers kiss cold sufferers passionately for several minutes, and only 6 percent caught colds. It seems that there are very low concentrations of cold viruses in saliva.

What about taking vitamin C to prevent colds? Some studies indicate that the vitamin may shorten the duration and severity of colds. But Dr. Jack M. Gwaltney, Jr., professor of internal medicine at the University of

Virginia School of Medicine in Charlottesville, argues: "The scientific evidence simply does not yet support a preventive effect for vitamin C."

Researchers say good ventilation and vigilant personal hygiene are the most important factors in preventing colds. Among their recommendations: Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, and in-between times, keep your hands from your nose and eyes; use disposable facial tissues rather than cloth handkerchiefs.

For a free reprint of "Surprising Facts About the Common Cold," send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Reprint Manager, Dept. A-2, Reader's Digest, Box 25, Pleasantville, N.Y. 10570.

Dairy Day Programs Slated For Three Northwest Counties

MERCER — Three dairy day programs have been slated for northwest Pennsylvania next week.

Mercer County starts the programs on March 9 followed by Crawford County on March 10 and Erie County on March 11.

Dr. Howard J. Larsen, dairy nutritionist from the University of Wisconsin, will be the featured speaker for the three programs.

Larsen is known internationally for his research in high forage rations, dry matter intake and factors which promote economical high production.

He has done studies concerning storage and preservation of high moisture grains and forages, as well as environmental studies as related to all ages of dairy animals.

The dairy nutritionist contributes to Hoard's Dairymen where he talks about his practical experience in feeding dairy cattle at the Marshfield Research Station in Wisconsin.

Other features for the dairy days include an alfalfa growers panel of local dairymen

Dr. Richard Adams, Penn State dairy specialist, will discuss new concepts in dairy nutrition.

Tickets and more information is available from the extension offices in the participating counties.



Dr. Howard J. Larsen

Red Meat Production Declines 13 Percent

HARRISBURG — Commercial red meat production, dressed weight basis, in Pennsylvania during January 1987 totaled 77.7 million pounds, down 13 percent from January 1986, according to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service.

Beef slaughter at 98.6 million pounds liveweight was down 16 percent from January 1986. Total head slaughtered was 84,000, down 15 percent; liveweight averaged 1,173 pounds, a decrease of 20 pounds. Veal slaughter was 3.8 million pounds liveweight, down 13 percent. Calf slaughter of 22,400 head was down 14 percent; average liveweight increased one pound to 171 pounds.

Hog slaughter at 30.4 million pounds liveweight, was down one percent from a year earlier. Total head slaughtered was 126,600, down four percent. Average liveweight was up eight pounds to 240 pounds.

Lamb and mutton slaughter was 933 thousand pounds liveweight, down 8 percent. The number slaughtered was 8,400, down 9 percent. The average liveweight increased one pound to 111 pounds.

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