

# Hipocrates

Eugene Schoenfeld M.D.

1970

QUESTION: Can any harm come from making love in the bathtub? Hopefully not. Cleanie.

ANSWER: My research team plunged into action, after reflecting on the habits of whales and dolphins. Brace yourself for the answer: contusions and abrasions if the tub is empty, seasickness, drowning, or scalding if it's not and your inhibitions go down the drain.

QUESTION: While driving in an open convertible on a freeway, eyes red and tearing, I wondered about the components of air pollution. What are they?

ANSWER: Substances generally considered to be the major air pollutants are as follows:

1. Sulfur dioxide: irritates the respiratory tract. Largely produced by combustion of fuels. Through chemical reactions sulfur dioxide may be converted to sulfuric acid.
2. Carbon or soot: This is the visible pollutant found accumulating on windowsills. Soot may also carry cancer-producing agents into the lungs.
3. Carbon monoxide levels near freeways may be high enough to impair the mental efficiency of drivers.

Blood levels of drivers involved in accidents are now being studied. Chronic cigarette smokers have even a—higher level of carbon monoxide in their blood. The usefulness of blood donated by cigarette smokers may be reduced to lowered oxygen transport capabilities.

1. Carbon dioxide: causes “greenhouse effect” by admitting radiant heat from the sun while keeping convection heat close to the earth’s surface. Because of the estimated six billion tons of increased carbon in the earth’s



Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld speaking at Community Arts Auditorium, May 28, 1969 at a benefit for Open City.

Photo: Alan Gotkin.

atmosphere each year, some scientists believe the earth's temperature is rising. One prediction is that the "greenhouse effect" will increase the mean annual temperature by 5.8 degrees F. in the next 40 to 50 years.

2. Hydrocarbons: found in petroleum products, coal and natural gas. At least one hydrocarbon, benzo(a)-pyrene, is a known cancer-producing agent in laboratory animals. Soot may carry these compounds into the lungs.
3. Nitrogen oxides: Nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide may pollute surface water as well as the skies. Ingestion of nitrates in the water may be harmful to man.
4. Miscellaneous: fluorides, oxidants, ozone, peroxyacetylnitrate, aldehydes, lead, beryllium, arsenic, asbestos. Plus pesticides, fungicides and herbicides containing kerosene, sulfur, copper sulfate and cyanide.

QUESTION: The "Food For Thought" column by Mick and Lini in the *L.A. Free Press* has made some statements which really concern me. Writing about sugar, they say its use "produces tooth decay, falling hair and weak bone structure." And in the same column: "The annals of history are filled with the acts of violence committed by sugar addicts. Adolph Hitler, although a vegetarian, was a great lover of sugar."

They mention a case cited by macrobiotics advocate George Osawa "of a wealthy businessman who became schizophrenic due to the use of large quantities of sugar. He became totally incapacitated and had to be confined to an asylum. When sugar was removed from his diet his condition returned to almost normal within two weeks."

Finally they mention the University of Texas student who shot 34 people and was "apprehended with chocolate in his possession." Is this stuff for real? If so, why have I not been told all this before?

ANSWER: Blaming falling hair, weak bone structure, violence and mental disorders on sugar makes me wonder whether Mick and Lini's sources suffer from brain dysfunction caused by low blood sugar. Just because a belief is printed on paper or bound in a book doesn't mean it's true. Did Hitler's vegetarian diet produce his actions? Of course not, yet one could say so in print and be believed by some.

What about the schizophrenic businessman? Was he cured by withholding sugar from his diet or did psychiatric treatment play a part? George Osawa, incidentally, died recently at an early age, 63 years. Maybe he wasn't following his own diets—or maybe he was.

But Mick and Lini are right when they say it's not necessary to eat pure sugar. We get sufficient carbohydrates in foods such as bread and potatoes. Pure sugar promotes tooth decay by providing favorable conditions for growth of bacteria. However, sugar is not a poison. If anyone says it is, ask him for objective evidence and words in a book aren't enough.

Organic foods unquestionably taste better and are probably healthier than foods tainted with insecticides and adulterated with chemicals. I say "probably healthier" because no scientific evidence yet exists to show that people who eat supermarket food are less healthy than those who haunt organic food stores. Humans can do well eating an astounding variety of diets. The best known underground alchemist has eaten little besides meat for the last ten or twelve years, for an example.

Growing some or all of your own food will give you good nutrition and exercise and the rest of us a little more oxygen. I highly recommend a book called *Grow Your Own* by Jean Darlington, published by The Bookworks \$1.75, paperback.

Dr. Schoenfeld welcomes your letters. Write to him at 1611 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, California 94712.

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