

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Thursday, March 21, 1940.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "BOYS' SHIRTS AND BLOUSES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Publication available, Farmers' Bulletin 1837-F, Cotton Shirts for Men and Boys.

--00--00--00--

Boys will be boys-- and at a very early age they begin to want their clothes to look like Dad's. Even four or five-year-old boys wear blouses with a tailored finish, and while their trousers may button on around the waist, the color tabs, the side pocket, front placket and sleeve finish have tailored stitching and a mannish cut.

Older boys who go in for tennis, baseball, and other strenuous games, like sports type shirts with short sleeves and collars open at the neck. These open-neck shirts or blouses often have tails, and are not outgrown quite as soon as those with buttoned-up collars, long sleeves, and a definite waist line.

The Bureau of Home Economics found in its study of men's and boys' shirts, that while the boys' garments are like the men's in many respects, the best grade for boys usually corresponds to the medium quality for men.

Evidently experience has taught parents that boys outgrow their shirts very quickly, so it doesn't pay to spend too much for them. But economy can be carried too far. Many times a mother spends a good deal for a large number of cheap garments that cannot stand the necessary wear and tear. If she bought fewer shirts of better grade in the first place, she would be more satisfied, and in the long run, save money.

The materials most used for boys' shirts are percale, broadcloth, and novelty cottons. Since growing boys need strong, well-fitting clothing, specialists of the Bureau of Home Economics advise choosing full-cut shirts, made of firm, evenly woven



materials that are full-shrunk and of permanent color. As in men's shirts, the fabrics with smooth finishes are easiest to launder.

Those are the main points about buying boys' shirts: Full cut, good fit, firm, evenly woven materials, permanent color, smooth finish. If the blouse is the button-on style, say the home economists, be sure that the buttons at the waist are well reinforced with either strong tape or fabric, so they won't pull off or tear the shirt, because they receive considerable strain in the course of a boy's daily activities. In fact, blouses and shirts with tails are better than those that button on, for most active school age boys. Think how constantly they stoop, jump, climb, squat, and otherwise put a strain on their clothing.

Maybe your boy is about high school age, and what you are looking for is a youth's shirt. Youth's shirts are much like men's in appearance, with pointed or tab collars and tailored fronts. They don't have all the tailoring details of men's shirts. For example, back fullness is concentrated at the center back, whereas a well-made man's shirt has the fullness distributed or placed at the shoulder blades. Cuffs are usually the barrel style, not folded. Sleeve plackets are made continuous, - a cheaper finish than the tailored plackets in men's shirts.

You won't find the highest quality buttons on boys' and youths' shirts. Perhaps that's just as well, since they are so often pulled off. But look for shirts with buttons of uniform thickness that have no flaws.

If metal eyelets and lacings are used as fastenings on sport shirts, see that the material of the shirts is firmly woven and the eyelets securely clamped in. Otherwise they'll pull out after a few wearings. Loops used as fastenings, are easy to manage if they are securely sewed into the seams, so they won't pull out.

Of course, boys' shirts will wear longer if they fit well. If sleeves are too short or skimped in cut, they will pull and eventually tear both the front and



back of the shirt. If the neck band is too tight it is uncomfortable, and it will cause strain on the body of the shirt just below it.

Shirts for boys and juniors are marked according to age, rather than neck size like men's shirts. Youths' shirts are marked by neck size, and sometimes by age as well. You remember that the Bureau of Home Economics recommended sizing children's garments by two body measurements instead of by age, but as yet the trade has not generally adopted that system.

So to get good fit you will need to check your boy's present measurements on the shirts offered you in the store. Sleeve length is very important to the fit of long-sleeved shirts, but it isn't usually given on a boy's shirt. Nor can you go by an old shirt, because boys' shirts are so often outgrown. Take the boy's sleeve length from the prominent bone at the back of his neck to his wrist bone, with his arm extended at the side. Take his neck measurement where the collar generally rests. You might also take his chest measure to be sure the shirt isn't skimpy in the body.

It's hard enough on the clothing budget to have boys constantly outgrowing their shirts, without having shirts shrink when washed. So be sure to look for a label assuring you that the shirt "will not shrink more than such and such percent."

There's a new free bulletin prepared by the Bureau of Home Economics, on Cotton Shirts for Men and Boys, which gives a number of points about shrinkage. This bulletin also describes shirt fabrics of different kinds, and gives tips on workmanship details and fit. If you want a copy, write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Asking for Farmers' Bulletin 1837-F.

