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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Thursday, June 22, 1944.

QUESTION BOX:

Are tick bites dangerous?
What is niacin?
When add vanilla?
How use sour cream?

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists and entomologists of
the U.S. Department of Agriculture

--ooOoo--

Today we have a variety of questions in the mail bag--on vitamin values, vanilla various uses for sour cream--and one on that villain among insects---the tick that carries Rocky Mountain spotted fever. This alliterative array of questions is answered by scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Let's start off by the one about ticks.

"I have heard that in the region where I live there are many ticks in the woods. Are tick bites dangerous? What should I do if I find a tick on one of the children?"

A tick bite may result in nothing more than local irritation, say scientists in the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Or it may serve as the point of infection for that serious tick-borne disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever. This disease has been discovered in nearly every State, and sometimes it is fatal. Ticks also carry tularemia, or rabbit fever, and several other diseases.

If you find a tick on one of your children, remove and destroy it at once and put iodine on the bite. You find often many ticks on dogs. Remove them with tweezers and drop them into a can of kerosene. On people, ticks often attach themselves in the hair on the back of the neck. If they don't stay attached more than 5 or 6 hours, they are not likely to cause infection. If you believe there are ticks about, go over the children carefully, looking for ticks, about every 6 hours---morning, noon and night.

You don't have to go into deep woods or travel far from home to encounter ticks.

They may be in the underbrush along the walks near your home, or in the hedgerows near your vegetable garden. Keep the grass and weeds in such places closely cut and keep a constant watch for ticks during June and July. By mid-August most of them disappear, but it is well not to forget the tick menace entirely before mid-September.

Next we have a question connected with good nutrition. "What is niacin? I know it's one of the vitamins, but what does it do for the human body?"

Niacin is one of the chemical names for a member of the vitamin B family. Another name for niacin is nicotinic acid. That's not the same as nicotine. Other B vitamins you have heard about are thiamine and riboflavin. There are a number of others--each with a little different effect on the body. You need niacin to help nerves and digestion and for healthy skin.

Niacin is one of the B vitamins that serve as health watchmen to ward off pellagra. This disease weakens thousands of people in our own country. Victims of pellagra have skin trouble, poor digestion, feel weak and tired and gloomy.

Now as to the foods that contain niacin: Eggs, milk, lean meats, chicken, liver, haddock and salmon are all good sources, also leafy green vegetables, dried peas, peanuts, soybeans, cowpeas, tomato juice, whole grain wheat, especially the wheat germ. Fruits are not good sources of niacin, although they give us so many other vitamin values.

From vitamins we turn to vanilla---a flavor most people use in some way every day. This letter says: "My mother taught me to add the vanilla last in making a cake or a dessert. But one of my friends says this is wrong. What do home economists say?"

Home economists have been saying for some time past that vanilla and other extracts give a more even and lasting flavor to cakes and cookies if you add them to the fat when you cream it. Most flavoring extracts are essential oils which combine with and are held in by the fat. The same would be true of cake-like des-

serts. In gelatine and custards, add the vanilla last so that none of the essential flavor is cooked away.

Well, so much for the cakes your mother used to make. Now for a question on a food his mother specialized in. A newly married homemaker writes this letter: "My husband says he used to have sauce and salad dressings made with sour cream when he was at home. Sometimes I have cream turn sour, and my milkman sometimes sells sour cream. But I don't know how to use it. Can you give me some suggestions?"

There are lots of nice ways to use sour cream, the home economists say. Sour cream makes a good garnish, if you whip it. Or use it for cooked sauces and gravies, or for salad dressings, both cooked and uncooked. To whip sour cream, keep it cold, and whip it only until it is smooth and a little stiff. If you whip it too long, you'll have butter.

Try a spoonful of plain whipped sour cream as a garnish for a bowlful of cream of pea soup, or bean or beef soup. Season whipped sour cream with sugar, salt, pepper, lemon juice and vinegar for a dressing for cabbage, cucumbers, and lettuce. You can make a very nice hot sour cream sauce for vegetables. It's really a white sauce made with sour cream. Blend 1 tablespoon of flour and one of melted fat with a fourth of a teaspoon of salt, and add 1 cupful of sour cream. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens. Serve over asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, or potatoes. To vary the flavor, try adding parsley or chives, chopped fine, or chopped red or green peppers. This sauce is good with fish and meat as well as vegetables.

Here's a cooked salad dressing you may like; Beat 2 eggs very light. Add 1 cup of sour cream...half a teaspoon of salt...one-fourth teaspoon of mustard... 1 tablespoon of sugar...one-half cup of vinegar...and a few drops of tabasco or other hot sauce. Cook over hot water, stirring every minute until the dressing thickens, just as you make a soft custard. Good on cole slaw, hot or chilled, or for hot potato salad.

For an uncooked sour cream dressing, whip half a cup of sour cream. In another bowl mix 1 tablespoon of sugar, one-fourth teaspoon of salt, and a little pepper. Add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice and 2 tablespoon of vinegar; then stir the mixture gradually into the cream you have whipped. Good dressing for cabbage, cucumbers, or plain lettuce.

