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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, January

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(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Clothes for Winter Weather." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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You've often heard about the woman who "enjoyed poor health," and about the man whose ailments and complaints were the expensive luxuries in his life. But in these economy times, none of us can afford ill health as our luxury. Keeping fit is a paying proposition. That holds true for ourselves and our families. And keeping fit isn't much trouble if you go at it sensibly. In many little ways--yes, in easy little ways--we can keep in condition. Just a little care and common sense will often insure comfort and well being during these months when colds and other winter ailments are abroad.

Yesterday we talked about one of the cheapest and best forms of health insurance for winter--a good diet containing plenty of the protective foods. We mentioned especially cod liver oil and other foods that supply those two vitamins, A and D, necessary for keeping well in cold, dark weather.

But important as food is, it's not the only means of keeping fit at this season of year. Not only the meals we eat, but also the clothes we wear, the surroundings we live in, and our habits of life all affect our well being. Yes, even clothes may have a good deal to do with health.

Of course, we women generally think of style and price first, when we select clothes for ourselves or for the children. But we'd be wise if we dressed according to the thermometer as well as the fashion magazines. If you let the temperature be your guide in choosing winter clothes, you'll reap your reward in comfort and better health.

The specialists say that our bodies stay in best condition if we live in an even moderate temperature, and avoid both overheating and underheating. Clothes have a lot to do with the temperature of the body. Clothing isn't warm or cold in itself, but it acts on the body by holding in or conducting away the body's own natural warmth. The clothing that keeps you warmest, then, is the clothing that holds in the heat. Dry still air is a poor conductor of heat, so the air spaces in the clothing, rather than the clothing itself, are what actually keep the body warm. Generally, wool is a warmer material than cotton or silk, because wool fabrics contain more air spaces than other materials. Stiff, heavy, tightly-woven material is not so warm as light, fluffy, well-napped material because it has fewer air spaces.





When you're selecting good warm clothes for outdoor wear in cold weather, remember the rule: "Choose warmth without weight." Many people have the mistaken notion that if a coat weighs a lot, is so heavy that they can scarcely carry it, it will be extra warm. The joke is on them. The heavy coat isn't necessarily the warmest at all. In fact, it may be just the contrary. A weighty coat on a child may actually make the youngster colder by hindering the vigorous play which would keep him warm. But several layers of light, fluffy woollens always make for warmth and comfort. Often two light garments- perhaps a sweater worn under a coat - are warmer than one heavy coat. The air space between the two layers of garments helps hold the heat in.

Nowadays the specialists are suggesting light-weight, porous clothing for both children and adults in winter. The garments next to the skin is very important for comfort. Gone are the days when all of us wore heavy, fleece-lined underwear. And a good thing, too. Porous knitted undergarments which hold air spaces and help in the ventilation of the body are more healthful than a heavy, compactly woven underwear. A porous union suit of cotton generally gives enough protection and is more sanitary than wool because it's easier to wash thoroughly. An underwear fabric, too thick to let the air through, is less warm than a loose fabric with air spaces in its meshes.

The time was when we all wore quantities of heavy clothing, especially heavy underwear, for cold weather. Red flannel petticoats were among the standard garments of the well-dressed woman's wardrobe. Only the other day I saw a troussseau made for a bride of forty years ago. It included five beautifully embroidered pink flannel petticoats.

But the bride of today is likely to go into a better heated home than the bride of forty years ago. Furnace heated homes, apartments, offices and school rooms mean that many of us live at summer temperature the year around. If we're wise, we'll dress according to that temperature, wearing thin clothes indoors and very warm outside clothes. The child who lives in a furnace-heated house may wear the same light cotton undergarments and dresses or suits which he wears in summer. These cotton garments are much easier to keep clean than heavy wool clothes and they're less expensive and better for him. Of course, too little clothing wastes the heat of the body and is unhealthful and uncomfortable. But too much clothing is just as bad. Too warm clothing is enervating, it increases perspiration and that may mean a chill on going outdoors or in a draft.

For outdoor wear, light-weight, but thick wool coats are most comfortable for us grown-ups. The small child will probably be happiest in a one or two-piece play suit made of some fabric that is warm, light-weight, soft, pliable, moisture-proof and closely woven or knitted so that the wind can't penetrate. Knitted materials and sweater suits are elastic and fit snugly, but they won't do for very cold days for the stitches are far apart and the wind can blow through. Soft, fuzzy, woven materials are warmer. Cloth so tightly woven or treated so that it sheds water and slush helps keep the child dry as he plays.

So the main points to remember about dressing for health and comfort in cold weather are these; Choose clothing that suits your surroundings. If you live in a warm, furnace-heated house, wear light-weight, easily washed, porous underwear and light dresses or suits indoors. Outdoors wear thick, light-weight, fuzzy wraps over your light indoor clothes. Often two light-garments are warmer than one heavy one.

Tomorrow: A Fine Winter Recipe for Vegetable Soup, a Wednesday Dinner Menu and some news about "Flu" remedies.

