

## You and Your Health / By Dr. Mikal Ramadan

(Editor's note: The questions and answers presented here are not intended to serve as a substitute for the readers seeking personal and qualified health care for their medical problems.)

(This week by request, selected medical questions are being reprinted in Bilalian News.)

**QUESTION:** I am considering the pros and cons of becoming a vegetarian. I'd like to know if vegetarianism is injurious to one's health?

**ANSWER:** Although it is possible to maintain a good nutritious diet without meat you should keep in mind that a strict vegetarian is one who eats only vegetables, fruits and grains, and that you will most likely develop a vitamin B 12 deficiency

unless you supplement your diet with this vitamin. However, if you become a modified vegetarian and still include animal products, such as milk, eggs and cheese, this supplement will not be necessary in your diet. I might add that before you make your decision remember that moderate amounts of good clean meat (Halal) is certainly not injurious to your health.

**QUESTION:** I have heard so much about different diets and nutritional programs that I am thoroughly confused as to what my main nutritional concerns should be.

**ANSWER:** I would say simply to increase your consumption of fresh

fruits, and vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals. Reduce your fat and sugar consumption. Cut down on salt intake. Eat less red meat, more poultry and fish. Use polyunsaturated vegetable oil for cooking and drink plenty of water as your main thirst quencher. We would all be much healthier to reduce or eliminate from our diets such things as candies, baked goods, soft drinks, potato chips, alcohol and pork.

**QUESTION:** Are over-the-counter vitamin supplements important to good health?

**ANSWER:** They certainly are in someone who is vitamin deficient, such as a severe alcoholic or one existing on a very restricted diet. However, the average American diet supplies many times the required amount of vitamins and minerals. The excess vitamins are merely excreted in the urine while vitamin manufacturers enjoy enormous profits. I feel there should be some medical indication for vitamin therapy. Excessive intake of vitamins A and D may even prove harmful.



## Rise in cesarean births may increase risks to mothers, doctors say

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (UPI)—Two Brown University researchers are concerned that increased use of cesarean section during the delivery of babies may be increasing the risk of death to mothers.

Citing an 11-year study, Drs. John R. Evrard and Edwin M. Gold, called for "unremitting surveillance" of cesarean sections to determine how the procedure is affecting the death rate among mothers.

Cesarean section—making an incision through the mother's abdomen and womb to remove the baby—was used in only 6.4 per cent of all births in Rhode Island in 1964, compared to 14 per cent in 1975.

The doctors said medical advances have allowed physicians to shift emphasis from preserving life at

delivery to preventing delivery-related injuries to the infant.

"We are concerned that in our enthusiasm to do well by the baby, we may be losing perspective and fail to do well by the mother," Dr. Evrard said.

Their study showed there were 162,656 births in the state between 1965 and 1975. Of the total, 12,941 were by cesarean section. Nine of the mothers died, representing a rate of nearly 7 per 10,000.

During the same period, the maternal death rate following natural deliveries was 0.27 per 10,000.

Drs. Evrard and Gold hold joint appointments at the Brown University Medical School and Women and Infants Hospital.

## Flu strains on increase throughout nation

ATLANTA (UPI)—The season's flu epidemic has reached all U.S. states and territories except South Dakota and the Virgin Islands, with an unprecedented circulation of three different flu strains at the same time.

The National Center for Disease Control said Friday the rate of illness and the number of deaths caused by two of the flu viruses, A-Texas and A-Victoria, is on the decline.

However, officials said the third strain—the Russian flu—continued to spark outbreaks among young people in the nation's high schools and colleges and at military installations.

The Russian flu has spread to all

nine geographic regions of the country, 30 states and two major cities, New York and the District of Columbia.

The CDC said despite close surveillance there still have been no documented community outbreaks of the Russian strain. However, federal health officials expect such outbreaks in the future.

To that end, drug manufacturers are preparing a vaccine for protection against the A-USSR virus. A \$15 million dollar federally sponsored immunization program for high risk individuals, pending congressional approval, probably would begin late this summer or early fall.

## What most people want to know about cancer would fill a very tiny book.

We know cancer isn't exactly everyone's favorite subject. But ignoring it is also a mistake. A little knowledge about cancer could save your life.

Did you know, for instance, that some forms of cancer are preventable? You should know which ones and how.

And early detection and prompt treatment can improve chances for control and even

cure many cancers. There are facts you should know about early detection and treatment.

We're not suggesting that you read a medical textbook, but you can get clear, concise information about cancer prevention, early detection and treatment. Write **CANCER**, Box A, Bethesda, Maryland 20014. Or call the Cancer Information Service, free:

So California: 1-800-252-9066  
Colorado: 1-800-332-1850  
Connecticut: 1-800-922-0824  
Delaware: 800-523-3586  
District of Columbia Metro Area: (202) 232-2833  
Florida: 1-800-432-5953  
Illinois: 800-972-0586  
Maine: 1-800-225-7034  
Maryland: 800-492-1444  
Massachusetts: 1-800-952-742X  
Minnesota: 1-800-582-5262  
Montana: 1-800-525-0231  
New Jersey: 800-523-3586  
New York State: 1-800-462-7225  
New York City: (212) 794-7982  
North Carolina: 800-672-0943  
Pennsylvania: 800-872-3963  
Texas: 1-800-392-2040  
Washington: 1-800-563-2875  
Wisconsin: 800-362-8038  
Wyoming: 1-800-529-0231

For all other states: 800-638-6694



**Prevention. Early Detection. Prompt Treatment.**

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