

College Bulletin No. 89. Extension Series III—No. 5
Issued Monthly

Entered as second-class matter November 27, 1909,
at the postoffice at Corvallis, Oregon,
under Act of July 16, 1894

Oregon Agricultural College Extension Service

R. D. HETZEL
Director



The School Luncheon

BY

MRS. HENRIETTA CALVIN
Professor of Domestic Science

September, 1913

The Bulletins of the Oregon Agricultural College are
sent free to all residents of Oregon who request them.

THE SCHOOL LUNCHEON

The school luncheon as understood here is the one which takes the place of the noon-day meal eaten by other members of the family at home. There are certain fundamental conditions required. First, it must be sufficient in quantity; second, it must be of the right food constituents and quality; third, it must have a variety from day to day so that the appetite does not flag; fourth, it must be attractively arranged in a sanitary carrier.

There are certain objectionable conditions surrounding the school luncheon that can not be removed: the child eats alone without the companionship of home people, and there is a consequent loss of interest in eating; games are started during the luncheon period that cause the child to eat as hurriedly as possible and not more than enough to satisfy the first hunger. As a result of this latter condition, the children run to the lunch carrier for a few hasty bites just before they enter school to begin their study.

The child should always be supplied with a fresh paper napkin and every article of food should be wrapped in paraffine paper. That paper which comes for the wrapping of butter is satisfactory, and cheaper than the large sheets of paraffine paper.

Unfortunately, many schools provide no comfortable place for the eating of the noon luncheon. The women of every community should interest themselves in the conditions of the children at school and especially the conditions under which they eat or spend the noon-time.

THE CARRIER.

Each form of container for carrying school luncheons is subject to some criticism. The basket which permits ventilation also allows the entrance of dust and insects. The papier-

maché boxes are difficult to keep in an absolutely sanitary condition and when neglected become extremely objectionable. The tin pail keeps the food clean and prevents drying, but there is apt to be a mixture of odors and flavors. Taken all in all, the tin pail is least undesirable. It should be thoroughly scalded and aired each evening so that it will be entirely fresh for the next day's use. The dinner pails which are supplied with compartments, folding cups, knives and forks, are especially desirable but rather expensive. When properly cared for, they last for years, so the initial expense need not be considered.

The active, growing school child requires more food in proportion to its size than does either its father or mother. There are as many stunted children from lack of proper diet as there are stunted colts and calves. To attain its best physical development, a child must be at all times supplied with an abundance of easily-digested, properly prepared foods. These foods must be taken at regular intervals and presented in such a manner as to be attractive to the child. It is not necessary that the child be restricted to three meals a day, but if food is taken oftener it must be eaten at definite and regular intervals. The growing child must meet its day's expenditure of energy by a sufficient quantity of food; and besides this, it must consume enough extra food to make the necessary growth of bone, muscle, nerve, and other tissues.

Insufficiently fed, the child does not attain proper growth, and certain tissues are so ill-nourished that deformity of structure results. Any child that is regularly indisposed to physical exertion, or is irritable and nervous, is probably the victim of some error of diet. There is either an insufficient amount of some needed variety, a total excess of quantity, or the food is so prepared and eaten as to disturb digestion and absorption. Because children are building nerve, muscle, and bone, it is essential that they have a greater pro-

portion of fat, protein, and mineral matter in their diet than that which is usually prepared for adults.

The child of school age should use a great deal of milk, since milk supplies the essential constituents in an easily assimilated form. Eggs and meat are both necessary to the child and it is a mistake to attempt to substitute bulky, coarse vegetables and expect them to supply the protein needed. Now and then an article appears in the papers stating that the child who eats meat and eggs is more pugnacious and aggressive than the child deprived of these foods. It is quite probable that this is true; for the anaemic, ill-nourished child is seldom physically vigorous, and because of his weakness is timid and shrinking in disposition. The active, noisy, romping child is the normal child. Something is seriously the matter when a child is always quiet and well-behaved.

The school child should be encouraged to eat an easily digested and nourishing breakfast. Fruit, well-cooked cereal, lightly-cooked eggs, toast, and either cocoa made with milk, or milk alone, furnishes an ideal breakfast. The child should be encouraged to rise early enough to eat his breakfast in a leisurely manner without haste or anxiety. A day is badly begun when there is a poorly made toilet and a hastily consumed breakfast.

Sandwiches must appear as a part of every luncheon. If possible, there should be two varieties furnished each day and the varieties should vary from day to day. If one variety is of meat, the other may be of some sweet. The meat should be ground and seasoned. Often it is well to moisten it with some good plain salad dressing. The meat may be fried ham, boiled ham, beef steak, roast beef, liver, or chicken. Cottage cheese, with or without the addition of nuts, makes a good filling, and ordinary purchase cheese may be mixed with nuts or small particles of pickle. Nuts ground with either figs or dates

make an appetizing filling, as also do stewed prunes with nuts. Roasted peanuts ground at home and mixed with salad dressing are very much better than purchased peanut butter, but the latter is also relished by children.

Most of the above fillings can be prepared and placed in jelly glasses until needed. Of course they must not be allowed to become stale. The bread for the sandwiches should be cut very thin and spread evenly with butter. If the butter is first creamed thoroughly it can be spread thinly and evenly. No filling should be used that is inclined to soak into the bread. The crusts should be left on the bread.

It is well to have eggs appear in some form in the lunch box but not always hard boiled. Eggs may be made into steamed or baked custards, the flavoring of which should vary from time to time. There are also many egg and fruit combinations, such as the lemon and orange creams, which present the eggs in a new and attractive form.

Fresh fruit should be furnished every day. The banana is the poorest fruit that can be put into the lunch basket, because it is so seldom in perfect condition and is devoid of organic acid. An occasional portion of well made pie is not objectionable, but pie should not be a major part of every day's luncheon. Good cookies are relished by the children and satisfy their natural craving for sweets; if they are simple and well-made they are in no way objectionable.

The addition to the lunch of some "surprise," such as three or four portions of home-made candy and a few choice figs or some other small luxury, adds interest to the luncheon. It is very desirable that the child should carry a small jar of sweet milk. The object of the noon lunch at school is not merely to fill, but to feed, the child.