



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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TESTS PROVE FISH AS GOOD AS MEAT

Fishery foods are as good as meat for the human body.

Tests conducted by Dr. Hugo W. Nilson, pharmacologist at the Fish and Wildlife Service laboratory in College Park, Md., and Miss Shirley J. Wilson, a graduate assistant in fisheries, to show the effect of a fish diet on the red cell count and hemoglobin value of human blood have proven that fishery foods are the equal of meat.

The experiment was made in cooperation with the University of Maryland's College of Home Economics. It was the first of its kind in this laboratory to use human subjects. The results were announced today by the Fish and Wildlife Service's Branch of Commercial Fisheries.

Six University of Maryland co-eds, 19 to 24 years of age, participated in the eleven-week experiment. They consumed a standard diet of their own choice for three weeks. Blood tests taken once a week during this period reported their red cell counts and hemoglobin values.

During the next seven weeks, four of the girls stopped eating meat, and consumed fishery foods as the big noon-day dish of their diets. They ate fresh-water fish, salt-water fish, and shell fish -- broiled, baked, steamed, and fried. The two other girls continued on their regular diets on which meat was a chief item for the duration of the test.

The four girls on the fish diet returned to their standard food fare in the last week of the experiment to provide a second check.

Dr. Nilson and Miss Wilson noted that the red cell count and hemoglobin value of the four girls on the fish diets remained the same as when they were eating meat. The counts and values were the same in relationship as the two girls' on the standard diets during the seven-week period. There was even an increase in the cell count and in the hemoglobin value for the four girls on the fish diets for several weeks.

As a result of his experiment, Dr. Nilson says that fishery foods maintain as good a red cell count and hemoglobin value in human blood as does meat. Hemoglobin is the chemical substance that forms the blood's red color and carries oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body.

Dr. Nilson says that protein and mineral content of fishery foods is also the equal of meat. Protein and mineral values of all animal foods are probably the same, regardless of species, he says.

One of his recent experiments showed that from 89 to 96 percent of fishery foods is digestible, while 87 to 90 percent of beef and chicken is digestible.

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