VITAMIN C IN THE PREVENTION OF Colds.¹

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On two occasions I have had the therapeutic aspect of vitamins acutely brought home to me. In the epochal years of 1912 to 1914, I was engaged in clinical research on the beriberi heart. Nearly thirty years later—at the end of 1941—I found myself in medical charge of men whose diet was unavoidably deficient, not in vitamin B₁ this time, but in vitamins A and C. More than half of us contracted a vesicular rash, occasionally generalized, but as a rule localized to the arm-pits. At that time also, another unavoidable exigency demanded wholesale work with “K wire”. Most of the men got scratches, generally on the legs, which invariably became more or less infected. A large proportion of these men had a rise in temperature. In four cases, this rise was to over 105°F., with septicaemia and no local reaction. Two of these four men became stuporose, and had difficulty in taking by mouth

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"M & B 693" tablets—which, fortunately, there was a good supply. During resolution of the septicemia, ascobic acid was routinely added to all the case histories of the patients and the same time influenza was epidemic, and there were several cases of pneumonia. One of these patients had meningitic symptoms, and the condition of another patient, who was lowered by an attack of influenza, clinically resembled cerebrospinal meningitis. Another case, probably one of infected sines with an acute exacerbation, also resembled cerebrospinal meningitis. No beneficial effect was possible. There were no deaths, thanks to the sulpha-pyridine, which was given in very large doses to those patients who had meningitic symptoms. A little of a multiple vitamin preparation was given to patients whose temperature was between 102° and 103° F. An increase in the rapidity of resolution seemed certain. Sulphapyridine had been given as a routine measure to any patient with a temperature over 101° F. An experiment was now made in the case of a patient whose temperature was nearly 102° F., and who also had the usual enlarged glands at the insertion of the infected limb; sulphapyridine was withheld and six of the polyvitamin capsules were given within twelve hours. The resolution was at least as fast as in similar cases in which the sulphonamide drug but no vitamins was given, the temperature falling to and remaining normal within about a day or so. The supply of vitamins had become more plentiful, and the treatment for the moderately ill patients was now vitamins only, with continued success. Incidental results were dramatic.

About eighteen months later—in 1943—I had charge of about 50 patients suffering from typhus fever of the scrub variety. All the mildly affected patients stated afterwards that the last two weeks of the two weeks they were ill. About ten of the patients developed serious complications, mostly pneumonia; one patient had a urinary lesion and protracted tachycardia, and one patient had paralysis; and there was encephalitis, manifest mainly in relation to the subarachnoid region. Meanwhile had come to hand the&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&n...
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