Vitamin C Plays Important Role in Healing of Wounds Says B.S. Gould

Vitamin C, the basic fruit vitamin, holds a mysterious key to the rapid healing of wounds, according to Dr. Bernard S. Gould, associate professor of biochemistry.

Earlier studies by Gould and others have proved that animals deprived of Vitamin C cannot heal wounds and that there is a direct relationship between the amount of Vitamin C in the tissues and the ability to heal wounds.

But until now no one knew whether Vitamin C acted directly in the healing process or whether it mediated hormonal or enzymatic mechanisms that controlled the healing process.

Now, says Professor Gould, it is clear that Vitamin C is specific and that it acts directly at the site of healing. "It is the necessary agent," he says, "that makes possible the very rapid production of new tissues on the surface of the wound." According to him, the production of collagen in wound healing in early growth proceeds at a rate enormously accelerated compared to the extremely slow rate encountered once the individual reaches maturity.

Indeed, he believes, there appears to be more than one mechanism involved—one, dependent upon Vitamin C, during the early rapid growth and in wound healing and the other, perhaps relatively independent of Vitamin C, for the maintenance of healthy tissues.

It has also been shown that Vitamin C is required for the maintenance of newly heals tissues in animals and appears to be essential for a considerable time after apparent healing, he reports.

Having found that Vitamin C is specific for the healing process and acts chiefly at the site of healing, Gould points out, the problem is to discover the mechanism by which it works.

He spoke at a seminar especially arranged for newspapermen by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Office of Nuclear Engineering. The seminar was conducted by Dr. Theos S. Thompson, associate professor of nuclear engineering.

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ENGRAVING

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To make a diffraction grating of the new type, a blank of fine optical glass five inches wide and ten inches long is coated on one side in a vacuum with a film of aluminum about 1/3000 of an inch thick to produce a mirror. The 74,000 parallel grooves are engraved on this film with a fine diamond point. These grooves are each about 1/250,000 of an inch deep and straight and parallel to about one-twentieth of an inch. In addition, they must be equally spaced along the blank in such a way that the distance between them does not vary by more than a small fraction of a millimeter. When light shines on such a grating it is broken up into a multicolored spectrum such as it would be in a prism. However, the grating splits the light into its component parts much more thoroughly than a prism, and with a spectroscope one can determine more about the nature of the source of the light.

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