

## CONSUMER UPDATE

From the Home Economists,  
Rural Organizations and  
Services Branch

### Old Calcium Habits Best for Maturing Adults

**M**ature citizens should pick up on an old habit — drinking more milk and eating more cheese.

By 30 years of age or so, bones, largely made up of calcium, begin to atrophy (waste away). This atrophy, known as osteoporosis, is part of the aging process. Just as the greying of hair cannot be prevented, but proceeds at different rates from one individual to another, so does osteoporosis. However, there are possibilities that osteoporosis can be slowed. Osteoporosis alone does not contribute any disability. What it does is cause brittle bones, bones that are more likely to break following even a trivial incident

like tripping on a carpet.

Since all people with osteoporosis are in negative calcium balance, and since this condition occurs from age 30 upward, it is important that adults and mature citizens maintain their calcium intake daily.

Milk and cheese are the richest food sources of calcium. It would be difficult to obtain enough calcium daily, without including either in the diet every day.

Adults should budget for at least 375 millilitres (1-1/2 cups) of milk daily. Drink it, use it on cereal, in soups, casseroles or sauces. Remember that cheese is a concentrated form of milk,

a meat alternative, an excellent source of high quality protein and an especially valuable food for those with reduced appetites. A small serving satisfies and provides plenty of nourishment. There's no need to limit cheese intake to the best known form — slices.

Some nice day, walk to a nearby cheese shop or supermarket and ask about the specialty cheeses (better known as "European" varieties) that are now made in Ontario. Buy small amounts of different varieties and have a real treat — taste and nutrition wise. Do it often. Your bones will be better for the milk and cheese you eat every day. □

### Food Preservation Practices in the Home: A Consumer Survey

**I**n the summer of 1980, the Food Advisory Division, Agriculture Canada, designed a consumer survey, and administered it across Canada. The primary objective of the survey was to gather information to describe the habits, attitudes, and physical characteristics of those preserving food in the home, from selected areas. Home economists had suspected that home preservers were practising many unsafe food preservation methods but had very little data as proof. A secondary objective was to increase public exposure of the Food Advisory Division as a leading authority on food preservation in the home and as a source of publications on safe food preservation practices. A total of 17 005 publications on preservation were distributed to respondents of the questionnaire.

Questionnaires were completed by 8930 home preservers in eight different locations. Originally, five locations

were chosen as survey sites — Vancouver, the city of Toronto, the Canadian National Exhibition (C.N.E.) grounds in Toronto, Montreal, and St. John's. Ultimately, three more locations were added — rural Newfoundland, rural Nova Scotia, and the city of Ottawa. Within the five urban locations, interviewing sites were non-randomly chosen in all directions from the city center. Interviewers were positioned in high-traffic areas such as shopping malls, farmers' markets, and public parks. At the C.N.E., they were at the Home Canning Show. Rural communities within a day's travel from Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, and St. John's were also selected. In Nova Scotia, 14 different rural communities were chosen, and in Newfoundland, many small communities.

The findings were surprising and alarming, surprising in that almost half (45%) of the 20 033 people the inter-

viewers approached had preserved food at home. Of those who did not participate, 33% refused to, while another 22% were not eligible because they had never preserved food at home. The alarming discovery was the preservation methods used.

The profile of a new kind of home preserver emerged from the demographic data. Unlike their predecessors, today's home preservers do not necessarily live in a rural community nor are they necessarily homemakers. Food preserving was perceived as more than just an activity to use excess garden produce. For the most part, the preservers wished to produce good quality, nutritious preserved foods at economical prices.

The emphasis of home preservation has also changed from canning food to freezing; 80% of the respondents preserved food by freezing, 73% were making jams and jellies, 60% were pickling, and 32% were home canning.