“Laughter, The Best Medicine, comes in liquid form”

“Doc’s Spoonful of Medicine”

#4. Cod Liver Oil; was it all that?

In this year 2020, in which children have received such a raw deal from the responses to CoVid-19, one reflects on the wisdom and benevolence of post war governments, between 1941 and 1959, when children were massively helped by the introduction of free, incisive dietary supplementation, in the form of cod liver oil. Ahh, it is all water under the bridge now, and the bruhaha about free school meals just rubs salt into the wound. Children, especially from poor families, and during war time food rationing, (despite the official exclusion of children), were prone to bowed weak legs, due to rickets, a weakening disease of bones with low calcium content, resulting in deformity and fractures.

Cod liver oil abolished this. Wow! Now that, is a medical miracle! Cod liver oil contains Vitamins A and most importantly D, as well as Omega 3 fatty acids. Vitamin D3 binds to receptors in the gut to enable absorption of Calcium from the diet. Normally on sunny days the ultraviolet in sunlight enables special cells in our skin to actually make Vitamin D3, but between October and February the Mereside sun goes on vacation, with only a postcard on some fine days to wish us well. So, vitamin D3 in these months is greatly beneficial. Or a spoonful of Doc’s cod liver oil, will top up your vitamin D3.

Some children did not like the taste of cod liver oil. Can you believe that? So, malt was added to it, to make it sweet. Malt is a treacly sweet substance made from barley, or wheat (in other countries from rye, oats, or rice). It is rich in vitamins and minerals. It is also used to make beer, and whiskey, but I believe the head teachers did not permit daily doses of these derivatives of malt to be given to children.

Cod liver oil also made children more resistant to viral winter illness. We are now finding evidence that Vitamin D3 offers some protection against Covid-19. Well fancy that! I gave my own children cod liver oil from the second year of life till the end of A-levels, when I traded it in for Facebook and Insta! What a deal. As infants they agreed with me that cod liver oil was necessary for development of superpowers and preferable to being bitten by a radioactive spider. Maybe our negotiators with the EU could learn a thing or two.

In Bermuda and Jamaica shark liver oil is more prevalent than the oil from the liver of cod fish. Shark liver oil not only has a bit more bite to it, but for centuries it has been said to be good for wound heling, respiratory illness, and digestive problems.

Other sources of Vitamin D are cow’s milk and its products (free school milk in the 1960s and 1970s was another example of putting children first). Mushrooms are also rich in Vitamin D, but magic ones are not allowed in school dinners. I must say a word about Calcium. The myth that you MUST have milk and cheese for Calcium, needs a stick of dynamite up the proverbial. There is no fridge in the jungles that cover the planet, and probably only a third of the world can keep cows milk products from going rancid. No! Calcium is present aplenty, in dark green vegetables, meat, fish, and pulses, of which the planet is covered, not just the Western world. Bon appetit, Fletton folk.