

to be sold in stores other than pharmacies, review of a medicine for registration is made with the knowledge that it will be sold by those who have no professional qualifications and that it will be bought by the public for self-medication.

Vitamins

For administrative purposes vitamins stand between drugs and foods. They are natural components of many foods but at the same time several vitamins have been separated and purified or synthesized and are now dispensed in the usual pharmaceutical forms. They may be considered as either foods or drugs, depending on the claims made for them. Only the vitamins recognized as having established physiological or curative effects are listed in the regulations and the claims for these are limited by law.

In so far as vitamin-containing foods are concerned, the main problems are to discourage advertising claims that are not justifiable. Claims for their action are limited to those that have been well established by clinical studies. There are also foods to which vitamins are added either because they are normally low in vitamin content or because it is considered desirable for commercial reasons. If vitamins are to be added to foods it must be in reasonably large amounts, although an upper as well as a lower limit is set. It is understood that when claims are made for a vitamin in a food the vitamin is present in the amount stated or required by regulation.

Despite the restrictions that are put on the labelling and claims for vitamin products, there is an increasing number of foods appearing on the market with added vitamins in which the vitamins serve no purpose other than as a sales 'gimmick'. The only consolation in this situation is that people consuming these vitamins are suffering no harm to their health. In this connection a requirement of the vitamin regulations stipulates that products having more than a given level of vitamin content must be labelled "for therapeutic use only" and may not be advertised to the general public.

Foods

The Food and Drugs Act and regulations cover the foods sold in Canada from the standpoint of the prevention of health hazards and frauds. There are prohibitions on the sale of foods containing harmful or disgusting substances and against the manufacture, packaging and storage of food under unsanitary conditions. Food sold as meals in restaurants is not under the authority of the FDD, but is a provincial or municipal responsibility.

It is an offence to advertise, label or package a food in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or that is likely to create an erroneous impression about that food. Standards of composition or identity are set up for a number of foods and classes of foods. It is an offence to sell a food in such a way that it can be mistaken for a standardized food unless it does meet the standard in question. Requirements are laid down in the regulations for the labelling of all foods.

Consideration of the possible health hazards from foods brings to attention the two major sources of potential danger—bacterial contamination and the use of poisonous or harmful substances in or on foods for one reason or another. Another perhaps less obvious danger lies in the processing or preserving of foods in such a way that valuable (or even scarce) nutritional ingredients are lost. The Food and Drugs Act provides the authority to seize and destroy food that is found to be dangerously contaminated with bacteria or their toxins, to prosecute the manufacturer or vendor of such food and to inspect the manufacturing plants producing it.

The Food and Drug Directorate has been engaged for some time in inspection of food-processing plants with a view to forcing any manufacturers at fault to clean up their plants and produce clean wholesome foods. Warnings, advice, seizures and prosecutions are all used to improve the situation. Up to the present, it has not been a matter of applying bacteriological techniques to uncover the faults. The faults have been obvious to the eye and the first step in their elimination has been a vigorous use of broom and shovel and soap and water.