

Lack of electricity meant doing homework under barely luminous conditions lit by improvised tin lamps back in the villages.

This strained the eyes, making staying awake a burden and fatigue a common condition. Reading in bed, elbows resting on sisal mattresses stuffed with wood shavings, numbed the hands. Similarly, mornings were punctuated with school children gritting their teeth.

All these could result in diabetes, nerve-compression, excess alcohol or injury and, sometimes, painful sensations along the course of the sensory nerves. This is sometimes caused by absence of some vital food ingredients.

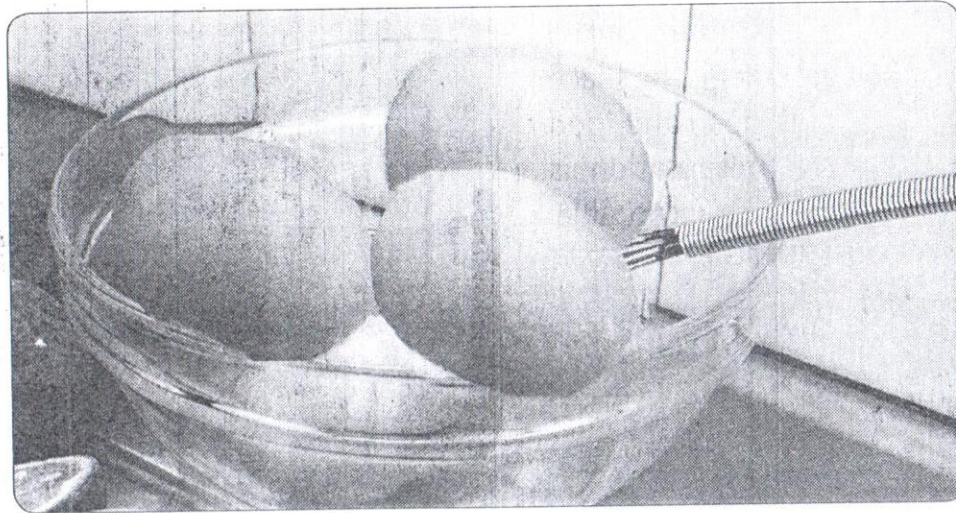
Very few people know that well prepared groundnuts provide high quality protein and are fairly rich in thiamine, riboflavin and nicotinic acid. Vitamin B-12 and thiamine are some ingredients whose lack could cause peripheral neuritis.

For instance, thiamine deficiency has been known to cause poor appetite, swollen lips and confusion. If eggs are consumed in excess, for instance, a thiamine deficiency could occur because they contain enzymes called thiaminases, which degrade the nutrient. When the immune function of the body is compromised, viruses that are dormant such as those that cause cold sores can be reawakened. Immunity is lowest during cold seasons, just before menstruation in women, when one is under immuno-suppressants and when infected.

It is during such times that diets play a significant role in containing opportunistic infections. The nervous system needs rest. Sleep and calmness are two things that help stabilise nerves. Nutrition, too, is a very important factor.

Potatoes, eggs, fish and beans contain pyridoxine in substantial quantities and, if well prepared, stimulate the nervous system to release energy in the body. Whole wheat contains biotin, a coenzyme of metabolism useful in the synthesis of fatty acids. When patients are fed intravenously for long,

# Strengthen your nerves ✓



*Over-consumption of eggs can compromise the body's immunity.*

## GOOD LIVING

BY SOLOMON KARANJA

this vitamin B group ingredient reduces, creating a situation where neurological conditions such as confusion are exhibited.

Herpes zoster is another viral disease that replicates inside nerves, causing inflammation, which often results in a blistering rash following the path of the nerve whose pain persists long after the disease symptoms have disappeared. The course it takes can change markedly with proper nutrition.

Vitamins E, C and the bioflavonoids present in avocados greatly benefit those recovering from this neural damage. Also during such an infection, eating food with substances that tend to destroy germs — like garlic and onions or contain immuno-stimulants like tomatoes, oranges and vegetables — helps a great deal. A large number of

## Vitamins E, C and the bioflavonoids in avocados benefits those recovering from neural damage

school children lag behind in class for lack of corrective lenses. The eyes, complex and delicate, make very little nutritional demands but the absence of vitamins A, C and E can affect the stability of their most sensitive parts. An appropriate diet protects against cataracts, improves adaptability to light and boosts visual acuity. We need not wait until we have half our population on corrective lenses, and thus catch up with the industrialised world's figures, before acting to correct neural eye defects. The diets of the people of the world, their polarity notwithstanding, need not be in conflict. Just as with medicines, diets have a shared goal of alleviating ill health. When deciding what



harms we all share a common interest.

Decade after decade since it struck, we have witnessed the devastation by a scourge that has wiped homesteads globally and continues to do so unchecked despite all the advances in technology. We shouldn't watch in silence as our taste buds lead us further into the doom and gloom of ill health, especially in a working nation like ours. Our people seek — and deserve — a future free of ill health inflicted by poor habits. Our societies have stayed stagnant, sometimes moving backwards, while the world moves ahead in areas of research into what heals and what harms.

These may be failures of being less proactive, though, but humanity must let the Pandora's box of diseases remain firmly closed.