

# ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ HOW THE STARS COUNTER COLDS

*By Doron K. Antrim*

**I**F YOU should happen to visit the dressing room of Dinah Shore prior to a public performance, you might find her standing on her head — or at least getting her feet up. She does it to prevent and cure colds.

Nor is this cold treatment as nonsensical as it seems. Dinah's headstand gets a rush of red blood to the nasal passages, which, according to Dinah, flushes out the cold bugs and tones up the whole vital area. Anyway, it makes sense to Dinah. It helps ward off colds, she finds. And that's very important to her.

To most of us, a snuffle is just a nuisance. To a singer or actor, a cold is costly. It could mean the loss of engagements, money, prestige. If a top singer misses one concert engagement, he loses from \$3,000 up. If a TV star drops out for a week, he drops a sizable stake. As a consequence, singers and actors will move mountains to stay in circulation. Too, stars have extra cold hazards connected with their work — dusty, drafty stages; air conditioned stu-

dios — all of which is another reason why they give the common cold an uncommon amount of attention.

Since stars have to deal with this micro-organism, which still eludes the wonder drugs, I wondered what they do. So I asked a number of them, specifically, how they knock a pending cold quickly so the show can go on or how they prevent colds. Maybe, I mused, the stars can offer a shred of hope to the twenty-million or so U.S. citizens who have bouts with this bug every year.

I found the favorite for a quick knockout of a cold to be the sweat-it-out-in-bed technique, with varia-



tions. At the first sneeze and chill, Jack Benny ducks under the covers.

"I hold no brief," he says, "for the hairy-chested gent who tries to fight a cold on his feet. I find that a spell in bed during the early stages is the best treatment for a cold that might otherwise hang on for two weeks. Besides, I find bed a delightful place. I sometimes wonder why one ever gets up."

Ann Sothorn saved a TV appearance one time when a cold threatened with this treatment: First, a glass of half-and-half rye and lemon juice, piping hot. Next, a compress of hot towels to the chest. Then a piling on of woolen blankets until perspiration oozes from every pore. Finally, absolute quiet and sleep for a few hours, or until one feels better.

A FEW dissenters, however, feel that going to bed is just coddling yourself. Cary Grant, for instance, swathes himself in a woolen scarf and takes a long walk. James Cagney takes a stiff workout at the gym.

When a cold threatens work on a picture, Gregory Peck takes bicarbonate of soda mixed in cold water, three glasses a day, and gargles pure lemon juice every two hours. Peck claims that the right way to gargle is to lie down, throw

back the head, take a deep breath, and let the liquid down as far as it will go without swallowing. Then make it percolate by saying the word, "row," rolling the "r."

When he feels a cold impending, Edward G. Robinson finds altitude opens up his nasal passages like magic, so he takes a plane ride. Once when a cold threatened a singing engagement of Lily Pons, she ate some garlic sandwiches and made her scheduled appearance, although her accompanist almost succumbed to asphyxiation. Now she's crazy about garlic as a prevention and cure. She even gives it to the dog.

"People who make a habit of eating garlic," she says with conviction, "are singularly free from nose and throat infection." She failed to mention what the people do who have to live with the people who eat garlic.

How to have a cold and not appear to have it is one of Hollywood's graver problems. Rosalind Russell suggests the following: frequent cold compresses to eyes to buck up drooping orbs, so they won't lose that come hither look; also, a minimum of mascara, and cream over lipstick to keep lips moist and mobile.

For prevention of colds, the stars put their trust in assorted lucky charm prescriptions.



Van Heflin insists he cured a cold by sitting under the arc lamps used in Technicolor. So he wards off colds by sitting under these lamps between scenes.

Kate Smith heads a cult that shuns steam heat and cries for fresh air. Kate says steam heat dries out her throat and makes her susceptible to colds. She prefers the outside terrace anytime to a room with a radiator. When winter really sets in, she departs for Lake Placid in the Adirondacks where she belongs to the Snow Birds Club.

SOME singers have conflicting ideas about fresh air. Lauritz Melchior, for instance, hunts bears in Alaska, sleeping out under the stars. Back home, he slumbers with the windows shut.

As for drafts, there are two schools of thought among the stars. One says to shun the slightest draft as you would the measles. The other claims that you will cease to fear drafts and colds if you show your utter contempt for them.

Last winter, Susan Hayward decided to test the latter. She took a hot bath, then stood for some minutes before an open window. Don't

misunderstand. The Venetian blinds were down. No cold developed. So Susan is no longer bluffed by drafts and says it's a psychological help.

Some stars think odors bring on colds. Several years ago, following a personal appearance, the Lily Pons apartment was filled with flowers. Next day she came down with a bad cold. Flowers around the house have been taboo with her ever since — excepting calla lilies, which have no scent.

But dust is considered the worst of all cold-bearing evils to which the stars are exposed. Dust, they find, causes throat dryness, soreness, hoarseness, bronchitis, to list a few of the evils. Under the best of conditions, stage stars have a certain amount of dust to contend with and

visit their doctors to get their tubes and sinuses swabbed out more or less frequently.

Probably the all-time dustiest show, and one having a record run, was "Tobacco Road." The ten tons of Jer-

sey dirt on the stage was a constant source of throat irritation to the actors. Sam Byrd, who played Dude Lester, spent \$100 a month just getting his sinuses swabbed out, and even then he could not keep them



clear. He finally had to quit the show.

Byrd's chief defense was chewing gum. He bought it by the carton. The gum acted as a lubricant and kept his mouth moist. It also collected dust and was renewed every few minutes.

MANY of the stars consider diet important to prevent colds. They eat sparingly of sweets, white bread and potatoes, believing an acid condition invites colds. Helen Hayes goes in for raw and cooked green and yellow vegetables, and insists that water in which the green vegetables have been cooked should also be served. Judy Garland eats plenty of spinach mixed with lemon juice.

But the one defense diet which gets the largest vote is fruit juice. The stars consume enough orange, pineapple and lemon juice to float the *Queen Mary*. Rise Stevens once found that by drinking water until it almost ran out of her ears she could cure a watery nose. Ever since, she takes eight glasses of liquid a day, water and fruit juices.

After all, there may be something to Ezio Pinza's claim that singers have a higher HQ (Health Quotient) and fewer colds than the rank and file. "Singers know how to breathe," he said in explanation. "They use all the lungs, not just one

little portion, as do most people. Shallow breathing invites infection in the unused portion of the lungs."

"Doctor" Pinza recommends that one do some deep breathing every day, with sniffing as a variant. Here's his prescription:

Sniff in four times quickly in succession and out twice, keeping up the rhythmic sequence. You'll sound like an old-fashioned locomotive getting under way, but never mind. Vary the sequence by using five, six, seven and eight sniffs in and corresponding exhalations. This gives a kick to the diaphragm and fills the lungs to the brim.

Then do some singing — if you must, in the bathroom. It's a grand place to sound off. The acoustics are good. You have no inhibitions and your voice sounds like a million. Really let go.

"Take it from me," concluded Pinza, "if you follow this formula, you'll have fewer colds, not to mention a sweeter disposition."

It might be worth trying. But remember, this is not a disquisition on what you should do about colds. First, see your doctor.

There's this much to be said, though. The stars have to do something about this common enemy since their livelihood is involved. If the same urgency confronted the rest of us, we might rise up and put this old bugaboo in its place.



# FLANDERS

## *of Vermont*

BY J. B. MATTHEWS

HAD IT not been for his connection with the McCarthy issue, Ralph Edward Flanders would have remained one of the more obscure members of the United States Senate — his very name, to say nothing of his labors, unknown to millions of Americans.

Senator Flanders may have reached a state of senility, as alleged by Senator McCarthy; but he unquestionably possessed a remarkable agility. With one jump, he bounded from obscurity to notoriety.

It was, perhaps, natural for Senator Flanders to fret more and more — he's in his 75th year — at the thought of his inconspicuous Senate

record, and to seek a remedy for his obscurity by plunging into the national limelight of the McCarthy controversy. If hundreds of other fellows could make national headlines by attacking McCarthy, why not he?

The Watkins Censure Committee included in its report the following statement: "The evidence shows that on June 11, 1954, Senator Flanders walked into the Senate caucus room where Senator McCarthy was testifying before a vast television audience in the Army-McCarthy hearings, and unexpectedly gave Senator McCarthy notice of an intended speech attacking Senator