



- › by topic
- ›› by NOS-feature
 - › Empirical evidence
 - › Step-by-step
 - ›› Prove
 - › Lavoisier and the conservation of mass
 - ›› **Eijkman and Beri-Beri**
 - › Dalton and the atoms
 - › Lind and scurvy
 - › Mendeleev and the Periodic System
 - › Democritus and the atoms
 - › Guericke and vacuum
 - › Rutherford's Nuclear Atom
 - › Laws and theories
 - › Creative
 - › Subjective
 - › Influence
 - › Technology
 - › Answers
- › by subject area

Eijkman and Beri-Beri

🔊 Listen

It was a lazy summer afternoon in 1886 in Berlin, Germany at the popular Café Bauer. In one corner, a figure sporting a bushy moustache was hunched over his afternoon coffee, reading a newspaper. It was the 28-year-old Dutch doctor, Christiaan Eijkman. Eijkman motioned to the waiter, who came hurrying over, "I will have another coffee, please." "Of course, sir," replied the waiter, eyeing the Dutch newspaper in front of Eijkman. "What brings you to Berlin?" he asked, unable to suppress his curiosity. "I have come to study bacteriology with Professor Koch at the University to investigate the cause of beriberi." "Beriberi?" inquired the waiter quizzically, "I have not heard of it." Eijkman straightened up. "It is a disease prevalent in the Indies that has become an issue of national security in the Netherlands." "How so?" asked the overly curious waiter. Eijkman continued, "Last year, my government sent a naval flotilla to Sumatra to curb pirate operations against merchant shipping. They had to call off the operation on account of the alarming, increasing incidence of beriberi among both the sailors and soldiers." The waiter leaned against the table, interest written all over his face. "Fascinating, indeed. It must be a very serious disease." Eijkman nodded, "Yes, it is completely debilitating. It involves weight loss, muscle weakness, extreme fatigue, confusion, a loss of the sense of feeling in the limbs, and paralysis. Often, due to fluid collection, it manifests in the swelling of the legs, enlargement of the heart, and heart failure." The waiter, realizing that he had not yet attended to the doctor's request, concluded, "Very impressive work! I wish you every success. I'll get your coffee immediately." Eijkman nodded and turned back to the newspaper. ...

Eijkman and Beri-Beri

Full Story

Datum: 07/14/2015

Datei: 197 KB (PDF)

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Biographies und historical backgrounds

Dateiname ^	Datum	Datei
Biography: Christiaan Eijkman 🔊	07/14/2015	167 KB (PDF)
Historical background: Nutrition 🔊	07/14/2015	1 MB (PDF)

Storytelling Resources

- › [\(Video\)](#)

Educational Resources

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Student Workbook on Eijkman and Vitamins 🔊	07/22/2015	401 KB (PDF)
Student's Learning Activities 🔊	07/22/2015	591 KB (PDF)
Suggestions to Teachers 🔊	07/22/2015	103 KB (PDF)

Historical Resources

A Primary Sources

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B Secondary Sources

Allchin, Douglas: Christiaan Eijkman & the Cause of Beri-Beri, *Doing biology*, New York, NY 1996.

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Story and all resources	3 MB (ZIP)

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Back to top Page # 16847 Permalink 06/19/2018