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## HISTORY OF PABLUM

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Goo goo ga ga ... whoops, sorry, we were just talking baby talk. Actually, that's not so far off the subject of this article! Though acquired by H. J. Heinz Company in 2005, from the time of its invention to that point, Pablum was largely an all-Canadian venture. The only exception to the list of prominent Canadians that co-developed the formula was Mr. Harry H. Engel, of Mead Johnson & Company. Mr. Engel held one of three patents for the Pablum formula.

In 1930, a group of three Canadian pediatricians — Dr. Frederick Tisdall, Dr. Theodore Drake, and Dr. Alan Brown — in concert with Ruth Herbert, a nutrition laboratory technician, and the aforementioned Harry Engel, co-developed Pablum. Everyone except for Mr. Engel was then working for Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. The name for the formula, taken from the Latin "pabulum", basically means "foodstuff". Well, this particular foodstuff was a major breakthrough in nutritional science. By ensuring children would have enough vitamin D in their diets, Pablum helped prevent rickets, a terrible childhood disease.

The interesting thing about Pablum is that it wasn't the first food designed and sold for babies. But it was the first baby food to arrive on the shelves precooked and totally dried. Pablum is easy to prepare, and that alone helped make it successful, early on in an era when infant malnutrition was rampant in industrialized countries.

The ingredients in Pablum Mixed Cereal include ground and precooked wheat, oatmeal, yellow corn meal, bone meal, dried brewer's yeast, and powdered alfalfa leaf, fortified with

reduced iron. In short, the Cereal is packed with minerals and vitamins! It's palatable, easily digested, and causes very few side effects. It doesn't contain eggs, lactose, or nuts of any kind. It's unlikely to cause allergic reactions. In most every way, this remarkable product is suited for almost everyone.

As a precursor to the release of Pablum (in 1931), its co-developers had developed a biscuit called Sunwheat. They talked about that in an article appeared in THE CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION JOURNAL, co-authored by the three doctors whose names appear above, along with Pearl Summerfeldt, MB. Among the many studies and conclusions mentioned, at the end it said this: "The biscuit should be regarded as belonging to the essential or protective class of foods, and may be used to replace the ordinary biscuit, rusk, zwiebach, toast, or bread which are nonprotective foods."

The doctors that developed this incredibly beneficial baby food all came from interesting backgrounds, and all worked to further our understanding of nutrition. Dr. Tisdall was the lead physician on the Hospital for Sick Children's nutrition project, joining the world-renowned hospital in 1921. In addition to co-developing Pablum, he wrote two textbooks on Pediatrics, numerous articles, and was a member of several health-care boards. Dr. Theodore Drake, born in Webbwood, Ontario in 1891, graduated from the University of Toronto, serving right afterward as a Medical Officer with the Canadian military during World War I. While in that role, he developed nutritious diets for military personnel, and it should be noted, for POW's alike. His work was duly recognized when he was bestowed membership in the Order of the British Empire. Dr. Brown, born in Clinton, Ontario in 1887, graduated from the University of Toronto Medical School in 1909. He completed internships at hospitals around the world, finally accepting employment at 'Sick Kids' hospital. He became a pioneer in pediatrics, and was known for reducing infant mortality rates by nearly one half... in one year's time.

Pablum is still sold today and in several flavours! New mothers and new parents continue to post questions on the internet about it, and about how much or little they should feed their babies. One only has to look as far as the Yahoo! Network for the kinds of questions being asked, or at websites like Heinz Baby, the Circle of Moms, eHealth Forum, and others for more information about Pablum, or about healthy baby nutrition.