

Clays May Help Cure Bone Ills

LOS ANGELES

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Gritty, clammy clayburgers fashioned from certain special types of clay—could, a biochemist reports, become a staple in the diets of spacemen and brittle-boned old folks.

The clays, according to Dr. Benjamin H. Ershoff, seem to be effective in promoting growth and preventing disorders in the bones of test animals; and perhaps they could serve as well for space travelers and the elderly.

DR. ERSHOFF, who conducted

his research at the University of Southern California School of Medicine, received a federal grant for the project.

The project began when scientists found evidence that astronauts' bodies may release from the bones under conditions of weightlessness, Ershoff said.

This, doctors said, weakens the body and increases chances that kidney stones may develop during flights lasting months or years.

When a small percentage of clay was added to the diet, Ershoff said, the animals' body weight increased and bone diseases were prevented. Little or no benefits were

supplement contained some factor or factors other than "THIS MEANS that the clay noted, he said, when calcium alone was added.

calcium which promoted improved calcium utilization and bone formation," he said.

Ershoff said further research is needed to find out how the clay works—and if it will work in humans.

He said solving of the problem would be used for space scientists, but added:

"It has much wider implications and much more importance numerically if it turns out to be an effective therapy which will prevent bone deterioration in older people."