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NEW FOOD FOR THIRD SKYLAB MISSION

Something new -- a high energy food bar -- has been added to the menu for the Skylab astronauts who may spend as many as 85 days circling the Earth in the final manned mission aboard America's first space station.

The final Skylab crew of Gerald Carr, Dr. Ed Gibson and William Pogue is scheduled to be launched aboard a Saturn IB from the Kennedy Space Center, Florida on November 10. The scheduled 60-day scientific data gathering expedition includes observations of the Sun and the comet Kohoutek, the Earth, and man himself as well as scores of other scientific and technological experiments aboard the 100-ton orbiting space laboratory. The mission is scheduled for 60-days with the option of extending it for as long as 85 days.

The new food is actually an off-spring of a food bar developed jointly by NASA, the U.S. Air Force and the Pillsbury Company. This bar is a modification of the commercially available Pillsbury food sticks.

The crew will eat these food bars every third day along with the regular Skylab food items. There are three types of bars -- chocolate chip, crispy and flake -- and each of these is coated with one of three flavors -- vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry. This offers a total of nine different types of bars.

The bars are two by four inches in size and weigh approximately 55 grams each.

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Dr. Norman Heidelbaugh of the NASA Johnson Space Center, Houston said that each bar is nutritionally complete and contains 300 calories each.

Requirement for the additional food bars came as a result of the possible extension of the mission to 85 days. There is adequate Skylab food aboard the workshop to provide meals for 56 days. Dr. Heidelbaugh said, "We turned to the Pillsbury bar as a means of providing a tasty and nutritionally balanced food without adding excessive weight to the command module."

One hundred and fifty-nine pounds of additional food has been placed onboard the command module to permit a possible mission extension of 28 days for a total mission duration of 85 days and to provide 10 days of food for an end of mission rescue capability. Seventy-five pounds of Skylab type food has been included to insure a more normal diet with the required variety for maintenance of a balanced menu. Three hundred and ninety-two bars which weigh 59 pounds have been added as high calorie supplements. These bars will be consumed by the crew every third day of the mission in combination with normal Skylab food. The 28 day mission extension would require approximately 233 pounds of Skylab food to be launched in the command module. Twenty-five pounds of the high calorie bars have been included for the 10 day rescue capability.

An example of the every third day menu is:

- Breakfast: Flake bar, sausage, grapefruit drink.
- Lunch: Chocolate chip bar, crispy bar, pork and potatoes.
- Dinner: Crispy bar, beef hash or chicken and gravy, mashed potatoes.
- Snack: Chocolate chip bar, dried apricots, spaghetti with meat.

The SL-4 crewmen have started on the planned inflight diet during their 21 day preflight period and will continue on the diet for 18 days postflight. Prior to the start of the controlled 21 day preflight period, the SL-4 crewmen ate samples of the high density food to insure crew acceptance and to preclude any potential individual problems with gastrointestinal compatibility.