

POST-OPERATIVE TREATMENT IN GYNÆCOLOGICAL SURGERY.

THERE are certain well-defined principles which may be followed in conducting the after-treatment of a patient upon whom an abdominal section has been performed, the observance of which is of the greatest importance, and the neglect of which may be attended with serious results. After operation the patient is to be removed to her bed, previously made warm, and hot-water bottles carefully placed on each side. One thirty-second of a grain of strychnine is at once given, and repeated every four hours for the first twenty-four hours; every six hours for the next twenty-four hours, and after that only if required. It is extremely difficult to lay down definite rules regarding food and drink, as patients respond differently under the same management, and the greatest ingenuity is often required. During the first twelve hours it will be found preferable to give nothing except small quantities of toast water, or warm water, from one to two teaspoonfuls every ten or fifteen minutes; or ten to fifteen drops of sherry in two or three teaspoonfuls of soda water, testing the ability of the stomach to retain and absorb it. This frequency of administration is not only tolerated, but is very comforting to the patient, relieving the thirst and diminishing vomiting as well, when present. Ice, as a rule, while grateful to the mouth of the patient, is not as well borne as warm water, and the patient is never satisfied; besides, the injection into the stomach is apt to cause nausea. The distressing thirst, so often complained of after operation, may be relieved by frequent injections, into the rectum, of half a point of normal salt solution, and with some it is the practice to inject high up into the sigmoid flexure a quart of this solution, before the patient leaves the operating table. After the first twelve hours small quantities of chicken broth or beef tea, half an ounce every half hour, may be allowed, the time between administrations being extended as the amount given is increased. Albumen water, into which the juice of a ripe orange has been squeezed, is often well tolerated and very comforting. Milk, as a rule, is not a good substance to give by the mouth. It is not easily digested in the stomach, and the thick curds formed are either ejected, or act as an irritant in the intestinal canal.