



CARE OF THE YOUNG CHILD

First Prize Article

The proper time to begin to think of the care of the young child is about five months before it is born into this world. Then the prospective mother should look over the articles left from previous children (if she has had such) and add the necessary articles missing, while the new mother should plan her entire layette.

The size and expensiveness of the latter is entirely a matter of taste and pocket-book. However, for the busy prairie woman whose means and whose time for taking baby out on dress parade are limited, I would suggest buying a 30 yard length of the widest, best quality white flannelette, from which she should make four or five simple one-piece slips, gathered at neck and wrists into narrow bands of self material. Avoid yokes and all unnecessary seams as simplifying your own work and also adding to baby's comfort.

These little white flannelette slips are to be washed every day after baby's bath and hung carefully out in the air by the bottom hem where our prairie breezes will blow and shake them until they are delightfully soft and fluffy and smooth, requiring absolutely no ironing. After the slips are cut out use the balance of the 30 yards for making square napkins. As these latter will be somewhat large for a new born infant, I would buy another 10 or 20 yards of cheaper, narrower flannelette which I would use while baby was small. As, owing to the frequent washings, these will soon wear out, you will soon appreciate the advantage of having the larger and heavier ones to fall back upon, which in the meantime have served their purpose in taking the place of pinning blankets and sometimes in helping out in emergencies when you have not been able to keep up a sweet, clean supply of the smaller ones. And here let me note a warning, never, never use a napkin twice, even tho it "just had a little wet spot and you could just hang it out on the line to dry and no one would be any the wiser." Whenever a child wets its napkin, even tho you hang it out in the air to dry, the water evaporates, but a certain sediment remains which is very irritating to a good many infants. If they cannot be regularly washed and rinsed every day, then keep a pail of water handy in which you can rinse the napkins as you take them off the child; but I have found the best plan to keep a clean enamelled pail with a cover for the sole purpose of receiving all wet and soiled napkins all day until they are washed after baby's bath every morning. And now to come back to the wardrobe. See that you have three half cotton and half wool infants' shirts, double breasted, and, if possible, with no buttons on them that might annoy the little body. Next see that you have about one half dozen woollen bands, which I find best made of old white knitted woollen underwear, either men's or women's. The idea is that old underwear would naturally be soft and, being knitted, it will fit lots more snugly around the little body than the usual pink edged flannel bands. Now, together with three nice warm nursery blankets, which can be purchased for from 50 cents to 75 cents each, you have all the clothes absolutely necessary to keep baby comfortable for the first month or two, or until it begins kicking up its little feet and needs stockings and booties. After having this much done it is wise to keep all these things together in one place, a dresser drawer or one could make a little cupboard with several shelves out of a good sized box, paint it white and close the front with a white muslin curtain. This does fine to keep solely for baby's wardrobe.

Making a Crib for Baby

Next procure a large square wicker clothes basket, pad it out nicely with a clean old comforter or blanket, sides and all, cover this with some pink or blue sateen and again tuck this with some cheap dotted Swiss. This makes a dandy crib for your newcomer, to be placed on a trunk, two chairs or on the box wardrobe (if you make one) right next to your bed when you can comfortably administer to the baby during the night. Besides, you may carry the basket out on the porch or lawn in the summer time and you will find it invaluable to take along to picnics or on visits, etc. Your baby will always be comfortable and feel perfectly at home, instead of being peevish at being laid on a bench or strange bed.

As I have described it, you will find this crib very economical, for when your baby has out-grown it (which won't be until it is old enough to sit up and

there is danger of it leaning over and tipping it) you will find the basket handy on wash days and the dotted Swiss will make very acceptable sash curtains.

When I fix my crib for its occupant I place a nice large bed pillow in the bottom, on this a square of rubber sheeting (oilcloth will do as well), upon this a clean napkin to serve as a sheet. At the head end I place a small, very flat pillow covered with sateen or dotted Swiss.

Now it is ready for baby, wrapped in its own nursery blanket, covered with a light warm blanket and also a very light weight feather pillow if the thermometer happens to be about 55 degrees below zero. Here I will register another don't. Never make any of those pretty cheesecloth baby comforters; always use blankets, for no matter how pretty the quilts look when new, they are no good after being washed, while a blanket if handled right looks good and is good until worn almost thread-bare.

When this is all done it is wise to prepare your emergency basket or box. In this place a nightgown for yourself, also a large cotton band, a clean sterilized sheet, two hand towels, one bath towel, a box of vaseline, a box of baby powder, a bar of castile soap, a roll of absorbent cotton and a roll of antiseptic gauze, a paper of assorted sized safety pins, a box of boracic acid and a small bottle of carbolic acid. A good thing to add is a hot-water bottle and syringe, plenty of clean white rags and an entire set of clothes for baby, consisting of blanket, slip, one large and one small napkin, band, shirt and several squares of old

linen to be used as mouth and eye wipes. This should be prepared and kept closely covered from dust, fully three months before you expect the arrival. Then you will always be prepared for an emergency and will be saved the embarrassment that I have seen many women endure when things happened unexpectedly and a stranger coming in wasted valuable time hunting up bare necessities. I forgot to mention that sterilized scissors and some soft cotton string should also be added to the emergency basket together with a rubber sheet or oilcloth and a thick pad made out of dozens of newspapers placed together and quilted with thread to hold them. This paper pad is invaluable in regions where there is not a doctor with up-to-date equipment, and also in emergencies which happen so often.



Then after baby comes we will assume you to have ten days of good care, but after that it is up to the mother. Never fail to give your baby a daily bath. This should be done in water which seems just comfortably warm to your elbow. Not your hand, mind you, for it may be cold and thus the water might seem warm to you, but would not be warm enough for baby. The elbow, however, is a fairly reliable judge. Get a regular infant's bath tub and before you touch the

Dressing Baby Properly

Now I will give you my method of dressing an infant, taught me by a very efficient doctor, and which once tried will never be discarded for the old method of holding baby on your lap where it is next to impossible to put on bands without wrinkles.

On a table bed or couch, whichever is most convenient, smoothly spread a nursery blanket. About one foot from the top edge of this and right on the blanket spread your large napkin or pinning blanket. On the top edge of this spread your woollen shirt. On the bottom edge of the shirt lay your small napkin, folded in a triangle, and on this lay your band just as baby would wear these things. Then when baby has been patted dry in its large bath towel you lay it on the table and have both hands free to powder it in all the creases and then to just smooth the band around it and pin it, pin up the napkin, slip on its shirt, fold the large napkin around the body like a pinning blanket, wrap each little leg in separately and turn the bottom of the napkin up underneath the baby where it acts as sort of a pad. Then you slip on its nightgown, wrap the blanket snugly around it and baby is sweet and clean until morning, excepting, of course, its regular change of napkins.

Always keep all white or unfadable cotton rags, see that they are clean, cut into 10 inch squares and insert one into each napkin when you make the baby's change. If only wet it can be rinsed with the rest of baby's clothes, but if otherwise soiled, gather up the four ends and put the muss directly into the stove. This saves an endless amount of extra rubbing besides doing away entirely with the unpleasant part of baby's washing.

As I do not hold baby on my lap to dress it, so I do not hold it in the bath tub. When removing the child's clothes I take its slip (if not wet) or a clean napkin (if the slip is wet) and place it at the head of the bath tub in which there is enough water to just come up to baby's ears when it lies in the tub with the slip acting as a sort of pillow. This method leaves both hands free to wash the body thoroughly.

In a cup have a good pinch of boracic acid dissolved in some lukewarm water and use this liquid to wash out baby's mouth with a clean linen square or piece of gauze or cotton. Then wash out baby's eyes, and if they could show the least affection do not use the same rag on both eyes so as not to pass the trouble from one eye to another. This done, have a clean wash rag which you use only for baby and with it and plenty of castile soap wash the head, then the neck, arms and breast, using especial care under the armpits, then the abdomen and legs.

To the young mother I would say, do not be afraid to handle the child however small, as they are almost like a rubber ball when born. Their bones are soft and they are not easily hurt unless really handled roughly.

Now, while baby is comfortably stretched out on the table you may slip out (that is as long as baby is not old enough to turn over) and clean up the bedroom which has been airing while you have been bathing baby out in the kitchen. When everything is spick and span, put your baby back in the basket and it will rarely bother you again before dinner, except to tend to its feeding.

In the summer time it is well to give the baby its bath about 8 o'clock a.m. Rising at 5 o'clock it gives you time to get breakfast, give baby its breakfast at 6 o'clock and then do your dishes, sweep up the kitchen and take care of your chickens. Immediately after its bath baby gets another meal, you clean its room, put it to sleep in its basket, wash out its clothes and you have from 9 or 10 o'clock to

