

The Home Doctor

The Child and the Dentist

Anne Bulbert Mahon

"If mothers only realized how important it is to prepare children in the right way of going to the dentist's, they would spare themselves and the children, as well as the dentist, untold trouble," said a specialist in the treatment of children's teeth.

"You have no idea how some of the children carry on," continued the dentist. "They scream and kick. Some of them go into regular nervous paroxysms even before I start to touch their teeth. One little girl actually fainted the moment she got into the chair, before I had even examined her teeth. Most of the fear is all in their minds. They have the idea impressed upon them that they are going to be hurt and it works them up into a perfect frenzy of nervousness. It is chiefly because of what they have heard from older people at home.

"Such remarks as these are made before them: 'I have to go to the dentist's and, oh, how I dread it!' 'How that dentist hurt me!' 'I would rather do anything than go to the dentist's!'

"Is it any wonder that the children look upon a visit to the dentist as an unknown terror? If older people were only careful not to make such remarks before sensitive little children and so imbue them with a horror of the dentist and his work, much of the child's unreasonable fear of the dentist's chair would be done away with."

It is absolutely necessary that children should go to the dentist in order to preserve their teeth and to prevent suffering with toothache. As it is something which every child must undergo, the mother should prepare for it reasonably, sensibly and tactfully. Not only will she make it much easier for the child as well as herself and the dentist, but she will also help to instill into the child that strength of character which recognizes that certain evils must be met with in life and borne with courage.

"You are such a brave boy," said a mother to her little four-year-old on the occasion of his first visit to the dentist, "that I know you will not mind even if it should be uncomfortable, even if it should hurt a little bit. You don't want to have toothache, nor to have ugly, black teeth, so I know you will open your mouth wide like a little man and help the dentist all you can—show him how brave you are. It will only hurt for a minute, anyhow, and then you will have no more toothache or trouble."

She was not without misgivings, for the child was an exceedingly sensitive, nervous little fellow, but she did not allow him to realize her doubts, nor to feel that "going to the dentist's" was a bugbear.

After the first allusion to the matter she did not dwell too much on the prospect, but when the time came, took him quietly and cheerfully, as a matter of course.

The little lad responded to her suggestions beyond her highest hopes. He sat as still as a mouse in the chair and allowed the dentist to fill several really large cavities without uttering a sound, and even allowed the separator to be put between his crowded little teeth and the gum pushed back without comment—an operation which many an older person can not stand without wincing.

"It hurt me terribly, mother," he confided afterwards, "but I wasn't going to let the dentist think I wasn't brave."

In her heart the mother gave thanks, for she knew that the little fellow had begun to learn the lesson of bearing necessary pain bravely and that his courage in the dentist's chair was indicative of the strength and self-control which in after life would help him over many hard places.

It is easy to prepare a child sensibly and tactfully for visits to the doctor or to the dentist, to guard against any unnecessary childish fears and nervousness, if the mother will only make a little

effort and call to her aid the mighty power of suggestion, and appeal to the child's courage and bravery to help him bear what is painful but necessary.

A Home Medicine Chest

Every home, however large or small the family, should have a medicine chest containing the helpful agencies for the cure of minor complaints. These need not be merely drugs, says Miss Morell, in the Brooklyn "Daily Eagle," for the habit of indiscriminate drugging is one of the most injurious possible to any human system. It is much less dangerous to health to pay no attention to one's ills than to dose one's self for every little thing, and to take anything but the simplest and commonest remedies without the advice of a physician. Drugs do not work alike on all individuals. Morphine, which is a very strong sedative, affects some persons so that they appear to be insane. The rushing to headache powders every time one's head feels uncomfortable has been written up many times as a most dangerous course. The writer knew one girl made so ill by following the advice of a friend as to a remedy to cure her cold that for two months her life was despaired of. A safe rule to follow is: "Never take any drug not advised by the physician," who knows your temperament and what is best suited to your needs.

There are many simple curative mediums that may be kept at hand for the slight indispositions that need some attention to keep them from becoming serious. There should be rolls of cloth ready for binding up sprained limbs, mustard for baths and for plasters, peroxide of hydrogen for cuts or torn surfaces, tannic acid, to be dissolved in water as a gargle in cases of sore throats; menthol preparations to be rubbed on when there is external soreness; camphor and salt. Salt is good in many ways, as a gargle, dissolved in water and drank before going to bed, to regulate the bowels, to stop a hemorrhage, and for many other things.

There should be a hot water bag, or a bag of sand that can be heated, which is as effective as the hot-water bag, but heavier. Bands of thick flannel are the best thing to be used for applying hot fomentations. Flax-seed meal for poultices is also a standard remedy to keep at hand. Each family has its own special favorites in remedies. All poisons should be in three-cornered bottles or be provided with corks that

have pins in them, or are so cut that the instant one takes them in hand their dangerous nature is known. These things should be kept always together where not a moment need be lost when one requires them. Old handkerchiefs and napkins should be preserved for this purpose, for they are most valuable at times when applications are to be made, or tender places wiped. Of course, absorbent cotton should be added to the stores. The medicine closet should be put too high for any childish hands to reach it, even with the help of a chair. The chest may be simply a box with shelves, all painted in keeping with the room where it is placed. All prescriptions should be preserved in a book for use when again required. A druggist will always give a copy if requested, unless

some such drug as morphine is specified in it. In some places he is required to keep the original, so I am told. A medicine chest proves its merit after a very short trial.

Keeping Warm

Many persons who suffer from cold extremities accept the discomfort as a condition which is natural, and therefore beyond their control. The remedy really lies with themselves, and does not consist in hugging the stove or staying indoors, or in any other artificial protection.

The reason one feels cold first in the extremities is not alone because they are the remotest points reached by the blood



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