

Selections.

Surgical Hints.

WHEN you operate for appendicitis be sure that the patient's bladder is empty, and if the incision must be a low one, explore well by sight and touch so that an accidental vesical injury may be avoided.

In clean, granulating wounds, a dry dressing will diminish discharge and stimulate cicatrization; but if there are sloughing areas or patches, or if the granulations are not perfectly red and clean, a wet or an oily dressing is to be preferred.

When deciding which anæsthetic you will use in a given case do not lose sight of the fact that there are other methods of painless operating than by chloroform or other narcosis. Many major surgical operations may be performed with the aid of local anæsthetics, which avoid post-operative shock as well as certain unwelcome pulmonary or renal complications.

When acute sepsis threatens the life of a patient remember that it is your first duty to get rid of the infecting focus, even if in accomplishing this end you must sacrifice important structures. If it is your honest opinion that your patient's life is in danger, act promptly. "Operation a success; patient dead," is an old reproach to surgery; but not so grave a one as: "Patient dead; operation might have saved him."

When changing surgical wound dressings it is best to avoid, as far as possible, the handling of the soiled materials. Do as much as you can with the help of the dressing forceps, and keep your fingers unsoiled by the pus or other discharges. This precaution is a wise one, not only for your own sake, but for the sake of the next patient who may require your services.

Operations about the nose and mouth are much more comfortably performed if the patient's head is allowed to hang in the hyperextended position over the end of the table. The sight for an onlooker is a rather horrifying one because the blood runs over the patient's eyes and forehead and over his head, making indeed a gory spectacle, but no blood will enter the larynx and little, if any, will be swallowed, so that the annoying post-operative nausea, with the vomiting of large quantities of blood, is in great measure avoided.

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