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SUMMER DIARRHŒEA.

ITS CAUSES AND TREATMENT.

The summer season is usually a time of merry making and pleasure excursions, but it is also often a season of great anxiety to parents with young children. The heat and sudden changes of weather are conducive to serious intestinal disorders. Diarrhœa and vomiting will often inaugurate a severe cholera infantum that must be speedily relieved or death will ensue. Sometimes a persistent diarrhœa in infancy will cause rapid depression and fatal results.

Medical authorities give different names to various kinds of diarrhœal affections. A simple, irritative or mechanical diarrhœa is called acute intestinal indigestion. Excessive or improper feeding is a frequent cause. The custom of giving the babe a taste of various things at the table is unwise and productive of harm. Comparatively few parents feed their children properly. The tendency is to overfeed. More children die from this cause than from underfeeding. The impaired digestion may be caused by some ailment in the child itself, such as tuberculosis or some other wasting disease. Or the mother's milk may be unhealthy, and not suited to the infant. †

The diarrhœa may come on suddenly, or there may be symptoms preceding for several days. Restlessness, disturbed

sleep, abdominal pains, nausea or vomiting may be present before the diarrhœa comes. The stools will vary greatly in color; in infants they are apt to be green. When the stool is very acid there is likely to be severe straining with urging. This is not a good sign, and should be corrected as soon as possible. In this so called acute intestinal indigestion the diarrhœa will diminish during the quiet hours of sleep when no food and drinks are taken. Unless soon checked the stools will become thin, watery and more frequent. The patient is thirsty, peevish and restless; the features are pale and drawn; the tissues become soft and flabby, and there is a rapid loss of weight. The fever is not constant unless the simple form develops into a true inflammatory diarrhœa.

The treatment is often puzzling. The nursing infant must be given proper periods of rest. A babe should not sleep with its mother; the little one is apt to gorge itself as well as exhaust the mother. To properly nourish her child, the mother must get good food, sufficient sleep and plenty of fresh air. Prepared foods are sometimes used with good effect when suitable milk cannot be obtained. Barley or rice water may be given. If thirst is present give plenty of cool boiled water; frequent sponging will generally be soothing; allow plenty of fresh air at all times.

The medicinal treatment is very important and calls for careful investigation of the selected remedy. Space does not permit giving indications, but the following remedies have been found the most useful:—Aethusa, Arsenic, Belladonna, Bryonia, Calc Carb, Calc Phos., Cham., China, Cina and Ipecac. Indications for these drugs can be found in any of the domestic homœopathic books.

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