

THERAPEUTIC NOTES

THE USE OF KAOLIN TO REMOVE BACTERIA FROM THE THROAT AND NOSE*

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KAOLIN is used in immunologic and other investigations on account of its great absorptive powers. The idea occurred to us that, on account of this absorptive power, kaolin might be of use in removing bacteria from the nose and throat, especially in diphtheria carriers. Accordingly, with the co-operation of Dr. George H. Weaver, tests have been made in suitable cases in the Durand Hospital of the Memorial Institute for Infectious Diseases.

We have found that, when properly applied, kaolin in the form of a dry powder removes not only diphtheria bacilli, but also practically all bacteria from the nose in the course of from three to four days. For this purpose the kaolin is blown into the nose six or seven times a day at two-hour intervals by means of a rubber bulb attached to a glass tube, the free end of which tapers a little. The insufflation is repeated several times at each treatment. The success of this treatment appears to depend largely on the free and thorough distribution of kaolin over the nasal surfaces. In cases of more or less obstruction of the nasal passages, the removal of bacteria by kaolin insufflation is more difficult.

In order to secure the most thorough application of kaolin to the mucous membrane of the throat, patients, if old enough, are instructed to swallow as slowly as possible one-third teaspoonful of kaolin four or five times an hour during the day. In the case of adults and older children who are anxious to get rid of diphtheria bacilli, this method, which has been selected after trial of several others, involves no special difficulty. In the case of small children, it is more difficult to apply enough kaolin, and the plan of mixing the kaolin with sugar in the form of tablets is being considered. In a number of cases, in some of which there were a great many diphtheria bacilli in the throat, complete and apparently permanent removal has been accomplished by means of kaolin in the way described in from two to four days, the throat to a large extent being freed from all bacteria.

We have found also that the insufflation of kaolin into the nose in cases of rhinitis in scarlet fever appears to improve the condition rapidly and to remove streptococci and other bacteria quite promptly.

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