

Health Department.

[A certain space in each number of this journal will be devoted to questions and answers of correspondence on all subjects pertaining to health and hygiene. This department is now in charge of an experienced Medical Practitioner, and it is believed that it will be found practically useful. Questions under this department should be as brief as possible and clear in expression. They should be addressed to the editor of this journal and have the words "Health Department" written in the lower left corner on the face of the envelope.—Ed.]

A Few Health Rules.

The following brief and simple rules, if faithfully attended to, will do much to make life brighter and longer. They are so very simple that those people who know everything will doubtless turn up their noses at them, but their value will not be at all depreciated by this nasal exaltation on the part of such savants—in their own minds. Without further preface we beg to offer to our readers a few maxims, obedience to which will cost them nothing, except in the event of rule 6 having to be obeyed, and will certainly be productive of much good.

1. Early rising: In order to accomplish this take no late supper, unless really hungry, and go early to bed. The hour before bed-time should be spent in agreeable relaxation or in such exercises only as tend to compose the mind and promote inward peace and cheerfulness.

Simplicity, moderation and regularity with respect to diet: A judicious selection of the articles of food according as experience has proved what is most suitable to the individual. The quantity of food should be proportioned to the amount of exercise taken. Seldom eat between regular meals.

3. Quiet and comfort during meals: Bustle, vehement discussion, bad news, disagreeable companions and all vexatious excitement should be carefully excluded at meal times.

4. Eat very slowly with a view to the thorough mastication of your food; rather forego a meal, or take but half the quantity than eat too fast.

5. Refrain from both mental and bodily exertion for a short time after the principal meal. Never eat a full meal when the body is heated or much fatigued with exercise. Take a cup of tea and a cracker instead and wait for an hour or so.

6. Take no physic unless it be absolutely necessary; learn, if possible, how to keep well without it. In case of real indisposition consult a competent medical man without delay, and implicitly attend to his directions, and be sure not to forget to pay him when you get better.

7. Gentle exercise should be taken regularly every day for two hours at least, and it must never be forgotten that cheerfulness is an essential ingredient in all beneficial exercise.

8. The importance of perfect cleanliness of dress and person in every particular must not be overlooked. Bathe frequently. The thorough ventilation of apartments and an appearance of neatness and orderly arrangement in every part of the house, contribute, though indirectly, yet certainly and powerfully, to promote both health and cheerfulness; as the contrary state of things is generally found to produce discomfort, nervous irritation and depression of spirits.

9. Keep a strict control over the appetites and passions, with a fixed abhorrence of all excess and all unlawful gratification whatsoever. Every sort of vicious indulgence is highly injurious to health; first, directly, in its immediate effects upon the body; and, next, indirectly, in the perpetual dissatisfaction and anxiety of mind occasioned by it.

Defective Hearing.

Dr. Samuel Sexton, aural surgeon to the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, not long since read a paper before the State Charities' Aid Society on the necessity of providing in the public schools for the better education of children with defective hearing. We present some of its leading points.

Children may be partially defective in hearing; very deaf; and totally deaf—the last comprising those born deaf, and those who had learned to talk prior to their loss of hearing.

A special investigation in the New York City schools shows that children have continued there for years who have never heard with distinctness ordinary conversation, or have had hardly any hearing. Some of these were often punished for inattention or dullness; others had studied hard to secure promotion, but were put back because they had not fully understood the questions; and many had been driven discouraged from school by the rudeness of unthinking and unsympathizing teachers.

Of five hundred and seventy-five pupils examined under direction of the United States Bureau of Education, seventy-four were found to be more or less defective in hearing, only one of whom was known to be deaf by the teacher; while over fifty were not themselves aware that they were deaf. It is believed that, at the very least, ten per cent. (fourteen thousand) of the school children in New York City are in a similar condition. All of these need special aid to keep them from swelling the ranks of illiteracy. They should be seated in the front row, receive their instruction at short range, and in a distinct and elevated voice.

As to deaf mutes, day-schools have been established for them in eleven of our principal cities. This, where practicable, is much better than sending them away from home influences to the larger institutions. But it has been found that of the pupils in the latter, a large percentage—in Minnesota it is from fifteen to twenty-five per cent.—have hearing enough to be educated orally, by the aid of speaking tubes and of acoustic fans. Indeed, it is found that many of them, after instruction has continued for a time, can hear the voice, properly elevated, at a distance of ten or fifteen feet.

The instruction of deaf mutes and the very deaf should begin as early as the fourth or fifth year.

The hearing of all pupils in our schools should be tested by experts, and the State should adequately provide for the proper education of the deaf of every class.

Diabetes.

The chief characteristic of this disease is an abnormal amount of sugar in the blood. The cause of it is quite uncertain. According to Flint, it occurs in the vast majority of cases between the ages of thirty and fifty, in men much oftener than in women. It may exist a long time before it is noticed, and then continue years before proving fatal. It often gives a fatal issue to otherwise mild diseases. Its chief test is a large percentage of sugar in the water, the quantity of the latter, also, generally, not always, being increased.

Among the earlier symptoms are great thirst; a strong appetite, dryness of the mouth and acid saliva; later, emaciation, increasing muscular feebleness, and in many cases, irritability, melancholy and mental weakness. To arrest it, it must be taken in its early stages. One-third or more of its cases end in consumption.

A diabetic patient, when the disease has become confirmed, is liable to sudden death. The heart may fail from paralysis of its nerves; or, the blood-poison affecting the brain, the person may sink into a state of insensibility, delirium and coma (fatal lethargy). A slight cold may bring on this result. So may mere constipation and undue physical exertion, mental emotion and anxiety.

Flint says: "The disease seems to me less formidable than heretofore, provided proper treatment be adopted and persisted in."

The main thing is to arrange for the patient a diet which excludes, as far as possible, sugar and starch, and induce him rigidly to continue it. While cutting off so many articles of the ordinary diet, pains must be taken to supply their place with others sufficiently nutritious and appetizing. Gluten bread may take the place of common wheat bread. It contains only one-third as much starch as that made from entire wheat, and is acceptable to the taste.

The body should be carefully protected against the influence of atmospheric changes, and the skin be kept in a good condition. There should be exercise in the open air, but it should be moderate. Mental relaxation and recreation should be secured.

Catarrh.

A correspondent asks for an article upon catarrh. The word "catarrh," as popularly used, refers to an inflammation of the mucous membrane of the nasal passages, although there may be catarrh of the bronchial tubes, stomach, bowels, etc.

Nasal catarrh may be acute or chronic. The former is merely "a cold in the head," though generally a similar inflammation soon shows itself in the throat and bronchial tubes. It is strictly a slight, brief fever, which ordinarily passes off in a few days. Almost any acute attack may be broken up if the patient remains in a warm room, secures a gentle moisture of the skin, and uses a plain, nourishing diet.

But it is the second form, the chronic, that most people mean when they use the word catarrh. All chronic diseases are more difficult to cure, though less painful, than the acute. The very fact that an acute disease has become chronic indicates that the recuperative power of the parts affected has become weakened, possibly exhausted.

Each attack of nasal catarrh tends to a second, and thus to successive attacks. The person who suffers from them, therefore, becomes more and more liable to "take cold," not alone from exposure to cold, but from inhaling dust, especially coal dust, and whatever irritates the nasal membrane.

As an increased blood supply always flows to every inflamed tissue, the tissue tends to undue growth. For this reason, in chronic catarrh, there is a thickening of the mucous membrane, so that the nasal passages become more or less obstructed. This often causes the patient to breathe through his mouth, thus letting the cold air strike the larynx and the dust to enter in unimpeded. A tendency to serious lung and throat disease is the result.

The earlier stages are often treated by snuffing up a somewhat strong solution of salt and water, or a two per cent. solution of carbolic acid two or three times a day. If the head is thrown back, the fluid will flow into the mouth with very little effort.

When the nasal passages have become permanently obstructed, a physician should be called to remove the superfluous growth.

In rare cases the inflammation establishes itself within the internal cavities of the nose, in which case the mucus becomes fetid. The doctor alone should manage this.

Useful Hints.

To cure a felon, fill a tumbler with equal parts of fine salt and ice; mix well. Sink the finger in the center, allow it to remain until it is nearly frozen and numb, then withdraw it, and when sensation is restored renew the operation four or five times, when it will be found the disease is destroyed. This must be done before pus is formed.

For nose-bleed, get plenty of powdered alum up the nostrils.

To cure and heal a running sore, apply alum water twice a day.

There is nothing better for a cut than powdered rosin. Pound it until fine, and put it in an empty, clean pepper box with perforated top; then you can easily sift it out on the cut, put a soft cloth around the injured member, and wet it with cold water once in a while; it will prevent inflammation and soreness.

A simple remedy for neuralgia is to apply grated horseradish, prepared the same as for table use, to the temple when the face or head is affected, or to the wrist when the pain is in the arm or shoulder.

An excellent glycerine ointment for chapped hands is made by melting, with a gentle heat, two ounces of sweet oil of almonds, half an ounce of spermaceti, and one drachm of white wax. When melted, remove from the stove, and add an ounce of glycerine, and stir until the mixture is cold. The ointment can be scented with any perfume to suit the fancy. Keep it in wide-necked bottles.

MEDICAL QUERIES.

NOTICE.—Persons wishing to have medical questions answered in these pages should address their correspondence to the "Editor, Health Department of TRUTH." If this is not done their questions will not be attended to.

Persons sending us questions to be answered will confer a great favor by stating their age and general habits.

A. B., Leamington. 1. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. 2. Yes. 3. Yes. 4. You are probably freckled. Bathe often in cold water; take plenty of exercise and eschew evil habits.

A. F., Montreal, would like the prescription for a cooling medicine for spring 2nd question; having been under a chiropodist for two years, suffering from a corn on the big toe close to the side of the nail, and receiving no benefit could the editor of the Health Department recommend a cure for it. Ans.—1. There is nothing much superior to Citrate of Magnesia. 2. A very simple method of treating corns was published in this column last week: the principal thing to do is to relieve the corn from undue pressure.

W. B. Mt. Forest, says: "In your answer to H. C., of Mt. Forest, in regard to weak lungs and spitting blood, how many times a day should the inhalation be taken, and should the inhalation be used whether the lungs are bleeding or not? Also would you have the kindness to give a full description at earliest convenience—on how to treat congestion of the lungs." Ans.—Three times; it will do no harm if there be a hemorrhage, but are you sure the blood proceeds from the lungs? It may come from the stomach. You had better see a physician.

A CONSTANT READER suffers greatly from sick-headaches, and wishes to know how to treat it. Ans.—Relief may often be obtained by hot fomentations to the head followed by tepid compresses, but internal medicine is necessary. Sir Astley Cooper's pills taken twice a week for some little time are excellent, and a drink of lemonade, made by yourself from the fruit, on rising in the morning is a very pleasant and efficacious dose. If the head-ache be of a bilious nature, you should avoid the use of tobacco, spirits and coffee and most fat meats; fat bacon, however, is not bad.

S. D. L. says: Would you please tell me what medicine to take and what diet to reduce my flesh. Have doctored for five months for dropsy without relief. Gain from four to five pounds a week. Bowels constipated, urine scanty and high colored, circulation of blood very poor, blood thick and dark; troubled a great deal with numbness in limbs, arms and hands, also difficulty in breathing. Please answer through your paper and relieve a sufferer. Ans.—Send further particulars, as you may have kidney disease, or cirrhotic disease of the liver.

WILLIAM writes as follows: I shall feel so thankful for your advice in the next issue of TRUTH, to which I subscribe, in reference to the following queries: 1. A remedy to stop an ingrowing nail upon the great toe. 2. To clean the tongue that has been white upon the surface for years. 3. A cure for internal piles, which are of late becoming troublesome. Ans.—Phosphate of oil applied on bathing, or better still, pure carbolic acid to burn away the ingrowing nail; if that does not do, have it removed. 2. Aperient medicine. 3. Ungt. gallæ co. 1 oz. Apply with the finger; keep the bowels freely opened.

Freckles, or lentigo, may sometimes be made to disappear by an application of citric acid night and morning. The method employed by dermatologists, and attended with considerable success, is to apply a solution of corrosive sublimate, one to three grains to the ounce of water, or emulsion of almonds night and morning. Dr. Duhning reports the latter as the most satisfactory and advises its application until a slight amount of desquamation takes place.

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