

perspiration and to modify the circulation of the blood. They may be classified according to the special purposes for which they are given, according to their mode of preparation and ingredients, or according to the temperature at which they are given.

According to temperature, they may be classified as hot (from 100° to 112° F.), warm (from 90° to 100° F.), tepid (from 70° to 90° F.), and cold from 33° to 70° F.).

Effects of Baths.—Baths of all temperatures are given to reduce fever and inflammation. The temperature is reduced by cooling the blood and equalizing the circulation. The older method was to give only cold baths to reduce fever, but the more modern method is to give warm baths. Cold water applied to the surface tends to contract the surface capillaries and drive the blood inward. If the system is strong enough, the reaction will be to dilate the surface capillaries but if the system is weakened, this reaction may not take place. With warm baths the temperature is reduced by evaporation. The heat applied to the skin dilates the surface capillaries and tends to bring the blood to the surface, then the water which is allowed to evaporate from the skin takes up the heat and so cools the blood.

Baths also are given to relieve thirst. Thirst is a sign that the system needs water, and this may be absorbed

through the skin. After an abdominal operation when a patient is not allowed a drink on account of the vomiting which would result, bathing the face and hands will lessen the thirst.

Hot and vapor baths are given to induce perspiration. They are given especially in diseases of the kidneys to cause the skin to carry away the waste material which cannot be taken care of by the diseased kidneys. These baths also are given for nervousness. Hot baths stimulate the nervous system, but they should not be continued too long at a time, as overstimulating would result in faintness. Warm baths have a sedative effect. For this reason they frequently are given at night to induce sleep. Their general effect is to relieve the congestion of the brain and internal organs. They dilate the surface capillaries, and as the blood is drawn to the surface the congestion in other parts is relieved and sleep follows. In the same manner hot foot baths may relieve sleeplessness and also cure headache. In any hot bath or hot foot-bath given for these purposes, a cold cloth should be applied to the head at the same time. This prevents a rush of blood to the head and also is an aid in the equalization of the circulation. The same principle is in force when heat is applied to the feet to reduce fever. Very frequently when the head is "burning up" with fever the feet will be found to be cold.

Then, cold applied to the head and heat to the feet will reduce the temperature by equalizing the circulation.

Hot alcohol sweats sometimes are given instead of hot baths in severe kidney lesions. Acid steam baths often are given in rheumatism. These are similar to alcohol sweats, only vinegar is used instead of alcohol.

Baths may be given to overcome stupor or delirium, and to soothe irritations of the skin. For the latter, starch baths—either sponge or tub—are given. About eight ounces of starch are used to a gallon of water.

Manner of Giving Baths

Sponge Baths.—The bath most commonly given a bed patient is a sponge bath. This may be given for cleanliness, for nervousness, or to reduce temperature. The water may be of any temperature desired, and may or may not contain various drugs, such as alcohol.

In giving a sponge bath, everything should be in readiness before commencing the bath, so that the nurse will not have to leave the patient until the bath is finished. The clothing that is to be used after the bath should be well aired and in readiness. When the sponge is given for temperature, the necessary articles besides the clothing are two blankets, one basin of warm water and one of cold water containing ice, a cloth for the head and a wash cloth.

The patient is placed between blankets, using the same method as in changing the bed linen. All clothing is removed. A cloth wrung out of the ice water is applied to the forehead. (This should be renewed from time to time so that it does not become warm). The face is first bathed lightly with the wash cloth wet in warm water, then the remainder of the body is bathed in the following order: chest, abdomen, back, arms, legs. Remember the benefit is to be derived from the evaporation which is to cool the blood, so the body should not be dried, but the water allowed to evaporate. The wash cloth should not be wrung tightly, neither should it be so filled with water that the bed will become wet. The bathing should be done with long strokes, always towards the heart. For example, in bathing the arms the strokes should be the full length of the arm, going from the hand to the shoulder. A light stroke should be used. The inner surface of the arms and legs, the axilla, groin and neck should receive especial attention, as in these places the larger blood vessels lie near the surface and the bathing will have greater results. The entire bath should last from twenty minutes to half an hour. Only the portion of the body that is being bathed should be exposed, the remainder being kept covered with the blanket.

A sponge bath for nervousness should be given in a similar manner. In giving a bath, a nurse's manner should be quiet and calm so as not to excite the patient. Even in a bath for temperature, half the benefit of the bath is lost if the patient becomes restless and fretful. By her calm, yet assured manner, the nurse should quiet the patient.

In giving a sponge for cleanliness practically the same method is used except that the ice water for the head is not necessary and an additional basin of warm water and soap are required. The nurse should bathe one portion of the body at a time with the soapy water, rinse it with clear water and wipe and dry. With delicate patients it is not necessary to expose the body at all, as it is possible to bathe the patient by reaching under the blanket. However, one portion at a time usually is exposed as the nurse can work more quickly and easily this way.

Foot Baths.—To give a foot bath in bed the upper bedclothes are loosened at the foot. The lower sheet is protected by a rubber sheet or several thicknesses of newspapers. The patient lies on his back with the thighs and legs flexed so that the feet are easily placed in the foot tub. The upper bedclothes are then drawn around the feet. The water for a foot bath should not be too hot at first. It is better to place only a small amount of comfortably warm water in the tub at first then gradually add hot water until the water in the tub is as hot as can be borne. The feet should remain in the water about fifteen minutes. A little mustard added to the water increases the benefit derived from the bath. This should be added in the proportion of a tablespoonful to a gallon of water. It should be mixed with a little cold water before being added to the hot water.

Hot foot baths are used for headache, neuralgia in various parts of the body, dysmenorrhoea and sleeplessness. They also are useful for the chronic cold feet of elderly people, who are due to poor circulation. Such a person should take a hot mustard foot bath before retiring, allowing the feet to remain in the water fifteen or twenty minutes. After any hot foot bath the feet should be well dried and then not exposed to draughts.

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