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# PRACTICAL RULES AND PRECAUTIONS

FOR THE PREVENTION AND CURE OF

## SPASMODIC CHOLERA:

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*Addressed by the Central Board of Health, at Charlotte-Town, to the Inhabitants of the Island, as necessary to be generally known and adopted.*

**T**HE Board are anxious to impress upon the public attention, that they deem precautionary measures to be of paramount importance, and particularly those connected with cleanliness of the Streets, of Houses, and of persons, as well as the amelioration of the evils arising from poverty and distress, such as bad clothing and poor diet.

1st. The first precaution is one within the reach of all, and which is certainly the most important—and that is, the necessity of temperance, regularity of living, and cleanliness, personal and domestic. It has been found in every part of the world that Spasmodic Cholera uniformly seizes and destroys, with the rapidity of lightning, those who indulge in fermented or Spirituous Liquors, and intemperance of any kind. The dissolute, the dirty, the idle, all become its victims, while those who are cleanly, temperate and industrious, escape.

2d. As there is much reason to believe it is of a contagious nature, all unnecessary communication should be prevented between the infected and the healthy. This is not a reason, however, for neglecting the sick; duty and affection will, it is hoped, secure the faithful and tender discharge of that duty to all the afflicted; but it is the best of reasons for limiting the number of attendants upon them to those alone who are necessary for that object, and to exclude carefully all others (even of the same family) who are not required.

3d. The Board feel the great importance of destroying, in so far as they are able, those ill-founded apprehensions of danger from infection which create unreasonable fears in the public mind, to the great aggravation of the mischief itself.

4th. It is commonly supposed that a person ill with an infectious disease spreads the contagion to a considerable distance; ~~which, however, is not the fact,~~ with respect to any known disease, so that it is safe to approach very near the sick without any danger, and even to perform all the kind offices to our friends which their illness requires, without a great increase of it, provided care be taken to keep the apartment, patient, and the personal linen, clean, the former freely ventilated and fumigated, it being well understood that perfect cleanliness and free ventilation are the great securities from infection of all kinds, rendering the poison innocent by dilution and diffusion through the atmosphere. For this reason, the patient labouring under Cholera should be placed in a separate and well aired apartment, either of his own house, or be removed to a building fitted up to receive the sick, according to circumstances.

5th. The personal clothing of the sick, during the course of the disease, should be immediately plunged into cold water, and permitted to soak until washed, &c. The room where he has been attacked should be thoroughly cleansed by scrubbing, limewashing (the lime being fresh and hot), and by free ventilation; and, if the means be at hand, by aspurgation with chloride of lime.

6th. To correct the atmosphere around the sick, or to purify apartments which cannot be easily ventilated, the two following methods of annihilating contagion by the vapours of Nitric and Muriatic Acids are of general efficacy, and practicable by all.

7th. Fumigation by the Nitrous Acid is produced in the following manner, by decomposing Nitre by means of heated Sulphuric Acid:—Take of Sulphuric Acid, or Oil of Vitriol, half an ounce, put it into a glass, china cup or saucer, and warm this over a lamp or in heated sand, adding to it from time to time, some Nitre. One, two, or three of these vessels may be placed on the floor, as the size of the apartment may require.

8th. Fumigation by Muriatic Acid is considered preferable to the above; it is more diffusible, and may be produced by putting one pound of common Salt into an earthen vessel, and pouring over it from time to time a small quantity of Sulphuric Acid, or Oil of Vitriol, till the whole Salt is moistened. If the air is foul and offensive, apply a gentle heat under the vessel, to extricate a larger quantity of vapour; but, in general, the simple addition of acid to the salt will be found sufficient, unless the apartment is very large.

9th. As soon as the disorder breaks out in any house, the Board recommend one of these fumigations in every room, in addition to free ventilation, and the greatest cleanliness. The same precautions should be adopted in Schools and places of public resort.

10th. The personal clothing should be complete, and warmer than usual, particularly that on the abdomen and feet. The greatest safety has been experienced in India from a dress of flannel, next the skin, from head to foot. A medical gentleman of ten years' experience in Bengal sates that he never knew a case occur to an individual who adopted fully this precaution.

11th. No person should allow himself to sit down and get cool with wet feet; they should be kept dry and warm.

12th. Avoid every irregularity, and excess in diet, particularly green or raw vegetables, and poor and unwholesome food of every description.

13th. Patients dying of Cholera should, with the least possible delay, be placed in coffins well smeared inside with pitch and tar.

14th. The bodies should be buried immediately, and should not be taken to Churches, but directly to the place of interment.

15th. In every case of death from Cholera, the house must be kept as free as possible from visitors, and the friends who attend the funeral should not assemble in the house.

16th. The Board would advise all persons to go out at night as little as possible, during the prevalence of the disease, and to use warm clothing, particularly during inclement weather.

17th. It is recommended to wear a broad flannel belt over the abdomen, and to take a meal before going out in the morning.

18th. It is of very great importance that all complaints of the stomach and bowels should be attended to during the prevalence of Cholera, however slight they may appear at first, and to place themselves under the observation of a medical man, the moment such symptoms occur.

19th. As it has been fully ascertained that, in a great majority of cases, the proper symptoms of Cholera are preceded for some hours, or even for one or two days, by slight stomach and bowel complaints, attended commonly by headache, frequency of the pulse, and languor, the most prompt measures are requisite to prevent the urgent symptoms from being fully formed, as this will render the disease milder than it otherwise would be; whereas, if those warnings are neglected, and the proper symptoms of epidemic Cholera are allowed to form, medical treatment, in a great proportion of instances, proves of little avail.

20th. The personal clothing of the sick, and all substances capable of being impregnated with the effluvia, or of vitiating the atmosphere, ought to be removed from the apartments of the sick to situations where the healthy cannot suffer by them, and where they may undergo a proper purification and ventilation. The linen and other clothes of the sick should be washed frequently besides.

21st. Those who die of the disease should be wrapt in the clothing in which they expired.

22d. It is of importance to avoid whatever weakens the body, by giving way to intemperance or sensuality, or by making use of a poor diet, great fatigue, or considerable evacuations.

23d. The mind should be kept cheerful, and as free from care, anxiety, fear, and lowness of spirits as possible, and the general health improved by Wine, Bark, and other tonic medicines.

24th. The leading and primary symptoms of Cholera should be generally known—they are either purging, spasms, or cramps; giddiness, with nausea or loathing; and more or less of vomiting. Added to the above, are the following characters: a great alteration in the general aspect of the patient—his appear-

ance is shrunk and ghastly, often of a blue tint, with great coldness of the skin when felt by another person. These are the principal symptoms; but persons cannot be too much on their guard, lest they be deceived, and imagine that any one so affected labours under Spasmodic Cholera. These appearances are those common to a disease well known in this country, the common Cholera.

25th. Whenever any or all of the above signs of the disease appear, and under such circumstances, the purging should be checked by 40 drops of Laudanum in a wine-glass of strong peppermint water, or weak spirits and water, and this may be repeated in an hour. If the purging be not checked, the patient should be confined to bed, and the heat kept up by long continued friction, by hot flannels, by heated bricks to the feet, and hot plates placed to the stomach. Should the patient be suddenly seized with the above symptoms, let him then be immediately placed between warm blankets; and should no medical person be at hand, let two table-spoonfuls of common kitchen salt, dissolved in six ounces of warm water, be given immediately, and at once, if he be an adult; let dry and steady heat be applied along the course of the spine and to the pit of the stomach (if no other means be at hand) by a succession of heated plates or platters. Let the upper and lower extremities be surrounded with bags of heated bran, corn, ashes or sand, and let him be assiduously rubbed with a warm hand, and a little oil or grease to protect the skin. Energetic, complete vomiting will probably be produced by the salt, and perhaps bilious purging with straining. On no occasion let the patient take a purge of Salts, such as Epsom Salts, for they have been found to be most injurious.

Under these circumstances no time should be lost in procuring medical aid; yet much will be gained by adopting the above measures previously, by attentive nursing, and by constantly rubbing the patient, who should keep most strictly to a horizontal position, for death has often instantly followed when a person labouring under the disease has attempted to stand, or even to sit in an half erect position.

Such are the measures which the Board recommend to be adopted before a medical person visit the patient.

#### *THE TREATMENT OF CHOLERA:*

*Chiefly extracted from the Report of the Edinburgh Board of Health, and which is regarded as decidedly the most successful mode of treating the Cholera which has any where been practised.*

I. The Board are satisfied that the disease may arise from hidden causes; and that it may also become contagious in circumstances not yet ascertained. But they are fully warranted in declaring, that, when it becomes contagious, the risk of its spreading is very much diminished if due attention be paid to cleanliness and sobriety, and therefore entreat every one, in the event of the disease appearing here, not to be misled by exaggerated notions of its contagious nature, and which would tend to place the sick in a state of destitution.

II. To prevent the great danger of delay to those situated in remote parts of the country, and to those attacked at midnight, when the disease is very apt to begin, the Board recommend families to provide the following articles, viz:

1. **MIXTURE**—Take Sulphuric Ether and Aromatic Spirit of Hartshorn, of each half an ounce; compound tincture of Cinnamon, one ounce. *Mix and cork up carefully.*

2. **LAUDANUM**—An ounce, to be kept in readiness.

3. **PILLS**—Take of Opium twenty-four grains; Camphor, one drachm; Spirit of Wine and Conserve of Roses, enough to make a mass of proper consistence; divide into twenty-four pills.

4. **CLYSTERS**—Take of Laudanum, an ounce; Tincture of Assafœtida, two ounces. Mix for keeping. Before using, mix three tea spoonfuls with a wine glass full of thin starch; and retain it when injected, by pressure below with a warm cloth, as long as possible.

5. **MUSTARD POULTICES**—Have always at hand four ounces of powdered mustard. A fourth part of this, spread over porridge poultices, will be sufficient for one patient.

6. **HOT AIR BATH**—The Board have approved of a hot air bath, of a simple construction, which may be made by any carpenter. Every family who can afford it ought to have one.

III. No time should be lost in sending for medical aid. But when the disease commences suddenly in a violent form, it is dangerous to lose even the time which must pass before such aid can be had. This form is at once known by sudden weakness, a contracted ghastly countenance, blueness of the lips, and general coldness, accompanying or preceding vomiting, purging and cramps.

In such cases, the friends will, without delay, give a table spoonful of the mixture, No. 1, with 60 drops of Laudanum, in half a wineglass full of cold water. Follow this with a table spoonful, occasionally, of warm spirits and water, or strongly spiced wine. Repeat two tea spoonfuls of the Mixture, with 30 drops Laudanum, every half hour, if the first does fail to relieve. If the Mixture be vomited, then give two Pills, No. 3, and repeat one every half hour, if the first two fail to relieve, or be vomited. But after the vomiting and cramps cease, the Mixture or Pills must not be repeated without medical advice. The Clyster, No. 4, should be resorted to also from the first, and repeated once if not retained.

N. B.—The doses of the Mixture, Laudanum, Pills, and Clyster, must not be exceeded. For children of fourteen, half the dose mentioned, and for children of seven, one-fourth is sufficient.

The Hot Air Bath, or, if it is not at hand, dry heat over the whole body in any shape, such as by hot blankets and hot bricks, sand, salt, or bottles of hot water, together with constant rubbing of the whole body, should likewise be resorted to from the first. The Mustard poultices should, as soon as possible, be applied over the belly and on the soles and calves, and kept on till the patient complains of the smarting.

By the time these measures have been put in force, opportunity will have been given for procuring medical advice; which is indispensable for the treatment afterwards. The Board think it necessary to apprise the public, that where this disease has prevailed, blood letting, when resorted to within the first, second or third hour from the commencement of the attack, has been generally found useful along with the other remedies, notwithstanding the appearance of sudden weakness and excessive sinking already mentioned.

Specimens of the Labels are here annexed for the information of medical persons and others in the country who may be applied to for the articles recommended by the Board.

#### No. 1.

**CHOLERA MIXTURE.**—A table-spoonful, with 60 drops of Laudanum, in half a wine-glassful of cold water. If this fail to relieve, repeat two spoonfuls, with 30 drops of Laudanum, every half hour.

Half these doses of Mixture and Laudanum for children of 14. One-fourth for children of 7.

Do not exceed the doses prescribed; and stop when the vomiting and cramps cease, unless you have medical advice.

#### No. 3.

**CHOLERA PILLS.**—To be used if the Mixture, No. 1, be vomited. Two pills at first, and then one every half hour, if the first fail to relieve. Half these doses for children of 14; one-fourth for children of 7. Do not exceed the doses prescribed; and stop when the vomiting and cramps cease, unless you have medical advice.

#### No. 4.

**CHOLERA CLYSTERS.**—Inject three tea-spoonfuls in a wine-glassful of thin warm gruel, and retain as long as possible by pressure below with a warm cloth. If not retained, repeat immediately, but otherwise not. Half the dose for children of 14; one fourth for children of 7.

**MUSTARD FOR POULTICES.**—A fourth part is enough for one person. Dust it thickly over porridge poultices, of which apply a large one on the belly, and others on the soles and calves. Remove when the patient complains much of the smarting.

By order of the Board,

**WILLIAM CULLEN, Secretary.**

Charlotte Town, July 1st, 1832.