

IMPORTANT POINTS IN THE TREATMENT OF THE NOSE.

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In dealing with such conditions of the nose as call for treatment, there are certain main features which should always be kept clearly in view. Without due consideration of these points damage may be done which can never be rectified, and the permanent results thereof may gravely impair the future comfort of the nose and its possessor.

When the normal nose is considered in regard to its function, it will be recognised that its interior is lined by a mucous membrane, nearly every part of which serves the important threefold work of moistening, warming and cleansing the inspired air during respiration. The anatomical arrangement of two chambers, divided by a rigid partition, each of which has projecting into it the prominences of the middle and inferior turbinates, contributes to the maintenance of this function by affording a means whereby the inspired air is sufficiently delayed on its journey to the lower air passages to enable the warming, moistening, and cleansing operations to be efficiently performed. The work which the nose has to do in dirty and smoke-laden city air is greatly increased, whilst the atmosphere of badly ventilated and overheated offices and rooms and that attendant upon dusty occupations throws still greater burdens upon it. To carry out its functions in a normal manner, the nose must be well drained, not only as a whole, but as regards all its glandular elements. This drainage may be interfered with by structural abnormalities or by obstructions due to the action of irritants. In this connection one is too apt to forget that irritants may come from within as well as from without. The action of dust, gases, and noxious fumes is patent to everyone, but it is not always remembered that there are systemic as well as environmental irritants. Such internal irritants as uric acid and the toxins resulting from bacterial infections in distant parts of the body have just as important an effect as have those which are inhaled from outside. Hence, to have a normal nose, the individual must possess good general health. The turbinates have to adapt themselves to every change of temperature, to dryness and moisture in their extremes, to alterations of blood pressure, and to reflex changes from the nervous system.

One of the points of first importance, therefore, is that the preservation of the normal function of the nose must be the first consideration in the treatment of all nasal diseases, and that any measures which may endanger this function are to be avoided as carefully and as conscientiously as the ophthalmologist would avoid such treatments as may damage the vision.

The main considerations in the treatment of the nose, therefore, must be directed to the ensuring of proper drainage and the maintenance of the integrity of the mucous membrane covering the turbinates, which bodies are those which perform the physiological functions of the organ.

The chief abnormalities in the adult which may interfere with the efficient drainage of the nose are those affecting the septum, and are, therefore, mainly structural. Deflections, crests, and spurs are very common, and their treatment is obvious. In children, adenoids are the chief, if not the sole offenders. They prevent the drainage of the nasal cavities as a whole, and have the further effect of acting frequently as a source of infection to those cavities. Enough has been said and written as to the effect of adenoids upon the function and development of the nose in children to need no detailed consideration of them here. It is the adult, rather, who claims attention. Until the present decade, the question of nasal drainage did not receive the attention which it demands, or, if it was considered, the methods employed for correcting its defects were neither adequate nor scientific. Obstruction due to structural abnormalities were too often met by the removal of portions of the turbinates, a measure indefensible on account of the interference with functionally active bodies thus entailed. One of the most unscientific instruments ever invented by the ingenuity of rhinological surgeons was the spokeshave for turbinates. Often, too, crests and spurs were removed by this weapon in such a manner as to leave extensive raw surfaces which were long in healing and entailed unnecessary loss of tissue. At the present day these crude and unscientific operations have given place to carefully planned methods, whereby adequate results are obtained at the least sacrifice. By means of the submucous resection of the nasal septum, large spurs can be removed and deviations corrected with the greatest efficiency. The methods for dealing with the nasal septum before the advent of this operation were unsatisfactory to a high degree. They consisted largely of crushing or cutting operations, with forcible corrections by

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