

WASHING.

Cleanliness is of vital importance to the health of all children.

Healthy infants should have a warm bath night and morning.

The body should be gently cleansed from head to foot with a sponge or flannel, and then quickly dried with a soft warm towel.

After three or four months the heat of the water should be gradually lowered, but it is not advisable to use quite cold water for young children.

CLOTHING.

The clothing of infants should be light, soft and warm, and arranged so as not to interfere with the free play of their limbs. All tight bandaging should be avoided.

The common practice of keeping the arms, shoulders, and legs of infants and children bare is hurtful. Children bear cold less well than grown-up people, and should be warmly clad, with the exception of the head.

VENTILATION.

Pure fresh air is of extreme importance to children. The rooms in which children sleep should be as large and airy as possible, not overcrowded, and the windows should be opened freely and frequently.

SLEEP.

Unless the weather be very cold, or the infant be premature or feeble, it is desirable that it should, from an early period, sleep away from the mother or Nurse, in a cradle or cot, care being taken that it is warmly covered.

For the first few months a healthy infant will naturally spend the greater part of its time in sleep.

Up to three years of age a mid-day sleep is beneficial.

In sleeping, as in feeding, regularity is of the utmost importance, and the infant should be put to bed at stated times.

Infants should be put directly into their cot or cradle, and not got into the habit of being nursed to sleep in the arms.

All Soothing Medicines, Cordials, Spirits, or Sleeping Drops, should be strictly avoided, as likely to do much harm. Nothing of this sort should be given except under Medical Advice.

AIR AND EXERCISE.

In fine weather the child should be taken out at least twice a day, care being taken that it is sufficiently clothed in winter. In warm summer weather the more it is in the open air the better, taking care to protect the head from the sun.

FEEDING.

Nothing is more important in the bringing up of children than the careful management of their feeding. Carelessness or errors in feeding cause a large proportion of the illnesses and deaths of young children.

SUCKLING.

Nature provides breast milk as the proper food for an infant, and suckling is by far the best way of feeding it.

Provided the mother or wet Nurse has plenty of milk, and is in good health, an infant requires and should have no other food but the breast milk until about the sixth month.

The milk itself, for the first few days, acts as a laxative, and no other aperient is necessary.

Should the formation of the milk be delayed, a little cow's milk, diluted with an equal quantity of warm water, and slightly sweetened, may be given until the mother is ready to nurse.

The infant should, for the first six weeks, be put to the breast at regular intervals of two hours during the day. During the night it requires to be fed less often. As it gets older it does not require to be fed so frequently.

An infant soon learns regular habits as to feeding. It is a great mistake, and bad both for the mother and child, to give the breast whenever it cries, or to let it be

always sucking, particularly at night. This is a common cause of wind, colic, and indigestion.

HOW A NURSING MOTHER OR WET NURSE SHOULD BE FED.

A Nursing woman ought to live generously and well, but not grossly. She may take porter or ale, in moderation, with her meals. It is a common mistake for wet Nurses to live too well, and this often causes deranged digestion in the child.

Should a Nursing woman suffer from dizziness, dimness of sight, much palpitation and shortness of breath, or frequent night sweats, it is a sign that suckling disagrees with her, and that she should cease to Nurse.

MIXED FEEDING, WHEN THE MOTHER HAS NOT ENOUGH MILK.

When the mother has not enough milk to nourish the child, other food may be given, especially during the night. This should consist of the best milk, with one third the quantity of warm water added.

This plan of combining breast-feeding with bottle-feeding is better than bringing up the child by hand alone.

WEANING.

The child should not be weaned suddenly, but by degrees, and, as a rule, should not be allowed to have the breast after the ninth month.

After the child has cut its front teeth it should have one or two meals a day of some light food, such as bread and milk or Nursery biscuits; and these may be gradually increased until the child is weaned.

When the child is about from seven to ten months old, according to its strength, it may have one meal a day of broth or beef tea, with crumb of bread soaked in it, or it may have the yolk of an egg lightly boiled.

When it is about a year and a half old it may have one meal a day of finely-minced meat; but even then milk should form a large proportion of its diet.

THE FOOD OF GROWN-UP PEOPLE BAD FOR CHILDREN.

Meat, potatoes, and food such as grown-up people eat, are often given to young infants. This kind of food, and all stimulants, are entirely unsuitable, and are common causes of diarrhoea and other troubles.

HAND FEEDING.

If the infant must be brought up by hand, the chief rule to remember is, that the food should resemble, as closely as possible, the milk provided for it by nature.

Milk, and milk only, should be used for this purpose. Asses' or goats' milk is best, but cows' milk will in general do sufficiently well.

Two-thirds pure and fresh milk, with one-third the quantity of hot water added to it, the whole being slightly sweetened, should be used.

A table-spoonful of lime-water may often, with great advantage, be added to the milk instead of an equal quantity of warm water.

The milk should be given from a feeding-bottle, which should be emptied and rinsed out after every meal, and the tube and cork, or teats, kept in water when not in use. Perfect cleanliness is most important, otherwise the milk may turn sour and disagree with the child.

The child should be fed regularly, just as if it was suckled; and it is a bad habit to give it the bottle merely to keep it quiet.

Milk diet alone should, as a rule, be given until the child begins to cut its teeth, when other food may be gradually commenced, as recommended under the head of "Suckling." When milk is found to disagree, other food should be given under medical advice.

Most of the mortality from hand-feeding arises from the use of arrow-root, corn-flour, and other unsuitable kinds of food, which consist of starch alone, contain no proper nourishment, and should not be used as substitutes for milk.

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