

Notes on Practical Nursing.

PREPARATION OF OPERATING ROOM SUPPLIES AND THE OPERATING ROOM IN HOSPITALS AND HOMES.

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(Continued from page 371.)

PREPARATION OF THE OPERATING ROOM IN PRIVATE HOMES.

Only in cases of emergencies should operations be performed in a private home, as too great risk is attached thereto.

Under any condition a trained, competent nurse should be secured and allowed full liberty to arrange for the operation in the best way possible. She should be given at least 24 hours for the preparations, and should consider it a grave duty to superintend the heavy cleaning of the room, etc., and should not hesitate to participate in the work if necessary.

As we rarely see in any home a perfectly clean and light kitchen, it would make a very poor operating room. A family too poor to have a fire in any other room in the house, would do far better to convey the patient to a hospital. Still, we meet with cases far out in the country, in a small log-cabin, perhaps, where we simply have to operate to save the patient's life, and working, as we then do, under hard difficulties, we are forced to submit to almost everything. In such cases it is advisable for the doctor and nurse to bring all necessary articles required for the operation. If the family is in better circumstances, and the nurse given ample time to prepare, she should select a medium sized room, light, and well ventilated, and, if possible, with a north window. The room should be prepared in the following manner. Dismantle the room of all its furniture and ornaments, then wash the ceiling and walls, if papered, with cornmeal or stale bread, which afterward is carefully collected and burned. If the room is painted, wash first with 5 per cent. Sol. Platt's Chloride or Carbolic Acid, then with hot soap suds, and finally disinfect again with above mentioned solutions. All wood work should be cleaned and disinfected in the same manner, and the window panes polished with 2 per cent.

All cracks in the walls and ceiling should be pasted over, either with wall paper in the same pattern, or plain white paper, if the walls are painted. Newspaper should never be used.

A bright fire should be lighted in the room for ventilation, and to absorb all moisture present.

Select three large kitchen tables, or five small

ones that are plain, and make them surgically clean previous to bringing them into the operating room. Spread on the floor (near a north window, if possible), a piece of oil-cloth, 72 by 90 inches, that has been disinfected, cover this with a bichloride sheet, and place the operating table, either one large, or two small ones, on this.

To the right, place another large or two small tables for the sponges, instruments, ligatures, dressings, etc.; in fact, everything needed, and at the other end of the room place the third large table for the receptacles necessary for cleaning the hands. Then cover everything with bichloride sheets in the evening, and let the operating room be closed for the night. While the cleaning is attended to the nurse can be sterilizing water and all clothing to be used.

Select two perfectly clean wash boilers, or other large receptacles, strain and sterilize the water as mentioned in chapter on solutions, then cover the receptacles first with a bichloride towel, secondly with the lid, and lastly with another bichloride towel, and bring the water into the operating room, where it is in no danger of its being touched.

The clothing is best sterilized in a steam boiler or a large kettle, in which three bricks have been placed standing, and enough water to cover them half way; on the bricks are placed a perforated board or a large colander, on this the clothing is put, and allowed to remain under cover for one hour and thirty minutes, then it is removed and stored in an antiseptic wash tub, lined with a bichloride sheet, and carefully covered with an additional bichloride sheet. The clothes should also be stored in the operating room, and we shall find them dry the next morning if the nurse has been careful in the sterilization. Under no conditions should the clothing be baked in the oven, and be considered sterilized, as too strong heat will burn them, and too weak heat does not render them sterile.

Three pitchers, two flat dishes for the instruments, and five or more bowls are needed, the number depending on the process the surgeon uses for sterilizing the hands.

Three slop pails are needed for soiled water, etc., or else the wash tub that contained the clothing can be used for that purpose when empty.

After the patient has been prepared the nurse should get a good night's sleep, unless the patient requires her attention, as a rested nurse is more alert and useful at the operation than one worn out and sleepy. Furthermore the family and the surgeon must take into consideration the hard task of watchfulness that lies before the nurse the first few days after an operation, and for the welfare of the patient allow her the rest.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)