

Medical Matters.

NUTRITIVE INFUSIONS IN DIETETICS.

The regimen has, says *Le Monde Medical*, acquired a preponderating position in therapeutics, but if it is to yield the desired effects we must give something more than vague general directions. On the contrary, we must give precise, formal instructions as to quantity, time, method of preparation, etc. Hence the advice given by Dr. Le Gendre on this subject may be of interest to our readers. We therefore quote below the article as it appeared in our contemporary.

The first prescription among those most frequently called for is "absolute diet." This is often rather difficult to get carried out because it seems to the patient and his friends that he is going to die of hunger. Nevertheless, in certain cases of gastric intolerance and when we wish to immobilise the intestine, when perforation is threatening, for instance, this must be insisted upon, nothing at all being allowed, not even liquids. As, however, the privation of fluid may entail much serious discomfort this may be given *per rectum* or in the form of nutrient enemata.

We may, for example, beat up one or two yolks of egg in five or six ounces of milk to which, in presence of intolerance, ten drops of laudanum may be added. Three or four of such enemata may be given throughout the day, but of course the intestine must be evacuated beforehand.

Should the patient be unable to retain the enema we may substitute injections of normal saline solution, say eight to ten fluid ounces at a time. In this way we may inject as much as a quart a day provided it be introduced quite slowly.

Short of absolute inanition we may prescribe a liquid diet to the exclusion of all solid food or of all substances requiring digestion. Hydric diet would be a better term for this since it is based on the employment of pure or mineral water, hot or cold, to which is added some corrective, especially lactose, which is diuretic (two or three ounces a day) or certain principles which, on account of their flavour or the chemical principles they contain, may be of use, such as the juices of fruit. These in virtue of the citrates, etc., which they contain alkaline the blood, undergoing transformation into bicarbonate of soda.

Bitter infusions are also of service. Lemonade may be given by way of acid drink:

Citric, with a drachm or so of citric acid to the quart.

Tartaric, with from one to three drachms of tartaric acid.

Sulphuric, with half-a-drachm of sulphuric acid.

Hydrochloric, with from one-half to one drachm of hydrochloric acid.

Of simple nutritive infusions however there is nothing to rival decoctions of cereals which are excellent in that they convey phosphates into the organism, especially in the course of acute affections characterised by marked phosphatic leakage, especially in adolescents during the period of growth.

There are numerous formulæ for the preparation of these decoctions. Springer recommends placing in eight pints of water two table-spoonful each of the following substance: wheat, barley, oats, rye, maize, and bran. This is boiled for three hours and when cold is passed through linen. It contains from four to six drachms of soluble matter to the quart. It may be sweetened and favoured to taste.

Infusions of vegetables may be employed under similar circumstances. Héry advises the following preparation: For 14 pints of water we take:

Carrots	13 ounces
Potatoes	10 "
Turnips	3½ "
Peas and Haricot Beans.....	3 "

These are boiled together for four hours, adding an ounce of salt. It may be consumed as such or it may be thickened by mixing it with rice, arrowroot, sago, etc.

A nourishing and agreeable decoction may be obtained with

Fresh Sorrel leaves	1½ ounce
Lettuce leaves	5 drachms
Charvil	2½ drachms
Salt	2½ drachms
Fresh Butter	80 grains

to be boiled for an hour in a quart of water, adding the butter thereafter.

To increase the nutritive qualities of this we may add meat juice or pass it through three or four ounces of pounded raw meat. It is then heated afresh over a water bath.

It is as important to be able to order these various preparations with the necessary instructions as to prescribe drugs, and we must not shirk going into details seeing that the patient can only learn them from the doctor.

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