

There are four methods of taking a patient's temperature—in the (1) axilla, (2) groin, (3) mouth, (4) rectum.

(1) After the thermometer has been lightly dried the nurse should examine it to make sure it is not above 95 degrees; then, if the patient is sweating at all, the axilla should be carefully dried and the thermometer placed in position with the bulb right in the axilla, and the rest of it parallel with the arm and between it and the chest.

The arm is then brought across the chest, the other hand placed on the elbow to keep it steady; if the patient is unable to do this, the nurse must hold the arm in position herself.

(2) Proceed in the same way as for the axilla and when the thermometer is in position the legs should be crossed at the knees if possible.

(3) The thermometer should be rinsed in cold water, dried, and placed under the tongue, and the lips tightly closed, so that cold air does not enter and prevent the correct temperature being registered.

(4) This is perhaps the most reliable method. The rectum should be empty of faecal matter; the thermometer, lubricated with vaseline, then introduced one and a half inches, and left in position the time required.

The points to impress on a new probationer are:—

(a) Always to put the thermometer in position and take it away herself.

(b) If an unexpected high temperature is registered to take it a second time with a different thermometer, in case there is a fault in the first one.

(c) Always disinfect the thermometer between each patient's temperature.

(d) In order to have a correct chart take the temperatures at the same hours each day and in the same place, as it varies at different times of the day and in the different parts of the body.

(e) Temperatures should be taken before washing, as the latter always lowers the temperature slightly.

(f) When the temperature is to be taken in the mouth it should not be within half an hour after food or drink.

(g) Children and delirious patients should never have the thermometer in their mouths, or they might break it. Always stay with these patients and hold the thermometer in position.

(h) Never try to take the temperature by mouth when breathing through the nose is difficult.

(i) Half-minute thermometers should be left in position double the time, to be quite sure.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

A number of excellent papers have been received this week, and there has been some difficulty in awarding the prize. Honourable mention is accorded to Miss M. Dods, Miss E. M. Rogers, Miss M. Eaves, Miss G. Nash, Miss M. Punchard, Miss E. Ramsay, Miss A. Welchman, and Miss L. Nunnerley.

Miss Nunnerley emphasises the necessity for keeping the thermometer in a strong antiseptic lotion, "otherwise it is a very sure means of conveying germs from one patient to another, especially in a hospital ward, where one thermometer goes the round of many people. In all contagious cases the patient should have a separate thermometer. . . . Never use the same thermometer for the rectum as in the mouth."

Miss Welchman gives, among the points to impress on probationers, "to inquire from the senior nurse where a temperature has previously been taken, as it is usually a degree higher in the mouth, and a degree and a half in the rectum, than in the axilla or groin."

Miss Ramsay, who advises that thermometers should be kept in a glass jar containing absorbent cotton thoroughly saturated in carbolic lotion 1 in 40, and covered with stretched jaconet, previously perforated for the number of thermometers in use, points out that care should be taken not to use the lotion too strong, or it will in time obliterate the markings on the thermometers.

Miss M. Punchard writes that probationers should be trained to take the temperature at the same time each day, not to take it immediately after washing a patient, or after undue excitement, or when from any exertion or exposure the body temperature may be altered temporarily.

Miss M. Dods points out that "in cases of phthisis rectal temperatures are usually preferred when possible. Young infants frequently strain and pass faeces when the bulb of a thermometer is inserted. This may cause injury to the delicate lining membrane of the rectum; therefore for them the groin is the usual site chosen for taking temperatures."

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Mention the principal points to be considered in the general care of the operating room.

The Executive Committee of the Irish Nurses' Association held their last meeting for this Session on Saturday, June 1st, at 8 p.m. There was a good attendance. Miss Reed was elected to go as delegate to represent the I.N.A. at the Conference of National Union of Women Workers being held in Oxford the end of September.

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