

obviously unsuitable for comparison, and have therefore been eliminated.

The rule of the hospital is that every mother shall breast-feed her baby, unless there is some contra-indication. The baby is weighed daily; if the weight is found to be less on the sixth day than it was on the third day, the baby is weighed before and after each feed during the next twenty-four hours; if by these test-feeds the baby is found to be unable to get a sufficient quantity from the breast, supplementary food is given. The weight of the baby and character of the stools are, of course, the best testimony to the efficiency of the mother as a nurse. The diet given is generous:—1½ pints of milk, milk pudding, eggs, red meat, potatoes, bread and butter, and broth are given after the bowels are freely opened. In the majority of the cases under consideration, the baby was put to the breast two-hourly during the day and four-hourly during the night; in the small minority of cases, the baby was fed three-hourly from birth onwards.

For purposes of classification, the mothers are divided into six classes:—1. *Those whose babies regained their birth weight by the end of the first week, the weight curve steadily rising with gain of ½ to 1 oz. per day.* These are to be considered good nursing mothers. To this class belong twenty-five elderly primiparæ and thirty-four primiparæ between the ages of twenty and thirty. A large proportion of the babies (thirty-seven out of fifty-nine) regained their birth weight on the sixth or seventh day; in two cases only was the birth weight regained on the third day. The smallest baby weighed 4 lb. 11 oz. at birth, regained the birth weight on the sixth day, and weighed 4 lb. 15½ oz. on the tenth day. The largest baby weighed 9 lb. 4¼ oz. at birth, regained the birth weight on the seventh day, and weighed 9 lb. 8½ oz. on the tenth day; this mother was an elderly primipara.

2. *Those whose babies regained their birth weight later than the seventh day; the charts, however, show a steadily rising curve.*—In the majority of the cases the delay in reaching the birth weight was due to the fact that there was a large initial loss during the first few days. To this class belong twenty-nine elderly primiparæ, and eleven primiparæ between the ages of twenty and thirty. The large initial loss was most marked in babies weighing over 7 lb.: in no case did the baby weigh less than 6½ lb., in three out of ten cases the baby weighed over 8 lb., the average works out at 6 lb. 15 oz. Experienced nurses are familiar with the fact that fat babies generally have a

larger initial loss than those that are less well nourished. It may partly be accounted for by the larger amount of meconium passed.

Age.	Initial Loss.	Birth Weight.	Weight on 10th Day.	Weight Regained.
31	10 oz.	133¼ oz.	131¾ oz.	12th day.
30	12 oz.	126 oz.	125 oz.	11th day.
31	—	112¾ oz.	113 oz.	10th day.
32	—	115 oz.	115¼ oz.	10th day.
39	11½ oz.	129½ oz.	132½ oz.	9th day.
35	10½ oz.	115½ oz.	111½ oz.	—
24	11 oz.	116½ oz.	117½ oz.	11th day.
21	10 oz.	134¼ oz.	134½ oz.	10th day.
21	10 oz.	108¼ oz.	108½ oz.	10th day.
25	10 oz.	119½ oz.	120¼ oz.	9th day.

This class contains six babies weighing less than 6 lb.: the smallest baby weighed 4 lb. 12 oz., on the tenth day the weight was 4 lb. 13 oz.

3. *Those, whose babies regained their birth weight the seventh day, but afterwards gained excessively, the milk being either too abundant or unduly rich.* Some gained too much one day and lost the next; in all the weight curve was erratic. This class is isolated to impress upon those who have the supervision of breast feeding the value of test-feeds, and the necessity for restricting the length of the feed or otherwise modifying it in those cases in which the chart shows an excessive gain. To this class belong five elderly primiparæ and nine primiparæ between the ages of twenty and thirty. The standard taken in this class was perhaps somewhat severe: a persistent gain of over 2 oz. a day, or an erratic large gain followed by a considerable loss, relegated the mother to this class. One baby actually gained 9¾ oz. one day and 6 oz. another. Another baby weighing 8 lb. 6 oz. lost 8 oz. on the fifth day, yet weighed 8 lb. 11 oz. on the tenth day. In two cases there was a very small initial loss, and in one case lactation was established on the second day. This only occurred in one other case in the series of 200 cases.

4. *Those whose babies did not regain their birth weight till the tenth day or later, with poor or erratic weight curve.*—In this class are included also the babies who regained their birth weight earlier, but had a poor weight curve. The fault in many of these cases lay in the weak digestive and assimilating powers of the baby, as the test feeds proved satisfactory, or otherwise supplemental feeds would have been given. The poor weight curve in many cases was due to some degree of enteritis

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)