

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

DESCRIBE HOW YOU WOULD CARE FOR AND FEED A PREMATURE INFANT.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Catherine Wright, 2, Dryden Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield.

PRIZE PAPER.

The care and feeding of a premature infant is a source of great interest, as the end in view is the rearing of a normal and vigorous infant.

A few preliminary arrangements will greatly add to the well-being of the baby.

The room in which it is to be nursed should be separate from that of the mother, so as to avoid undue disturbance and the oppressiveness of too warm a room.

For the baby, a bright, sunny, airy room, ventilated and warmed by an open fire, which may be protected by a fireguard. The room should be kept at a stationary temperature of 70 degrees Fahr. night and day. A small basket or cradle, lined with a soft blanket, large enough to act as coverlet, and two hot-water bottles, well protected by flannel bags, kept in the cradle, always hot enough to diffuse warmth to the child.

Gamgee tissue, obtained from a chemist, cut to size, and fastened like a coat in front, with tapes, with a separate piece for each limb, makes a light, soft covering for the skin, and is easily removed for any emergency.

A soft piece of rag, placed over the buttocks and well oiled, is an economy, as it can be easily removed when soiled, and burnt, being replaced by a fresh layer of rag, so avoiding an extravagant use of the gamgee tissue.

If the child is not under medical care, a doctor must be called in at once. The child should be weighed, and its weight chart kept regularly—the daily record is useful—together with the diet chart.

The eyes must be kept scrupulously clean, and bathed twice daily with warm boracic lotion and soft sterilized rag, a fresh piece for each application. The mouth must be gently swabbed with sterile rag moistened with boracic lotion twice a day, and with sterile water after each feed.

It is not wise to wash a very premature or feeble infant; simply cleanse the skin gently with warm olive oil, in the meantime observing any abnormality, then arrange the gamgee tissue, with soft rag and diaper.

The directions of the medical attendant as to the administration of food and stimulants must be most carefully followed.

As soon as the mother's breasts are secreting, the colostrum may be drawn off and given

as directed to the child, and, as the milk comes into the breasts, this may be drawn off and given with a pipette, if the child is unable to suck.

Every effort should be made to induce lactation, and the baby put to the breast, if strong enough to draw, so stimulating the flow of milk, in order that breast feeding may be established, a most important factor in the rearing of any infant, and especially a premature one.

It may be that, after every known procedure to help lactation, or on account of disease, hereditary or otherwise, lactation is impossible, *then*, only, may artificial feeding be allowed.

The following is a milk mixture prescribed for a premature infant:—

	Per cent.
Fat	1.25
Lactose	4.50
Whey Proteins	0.50
Caseinogen	0.25
Lime Water	5.00
Water	88.50
	100.00

In two-hourly feeds, 2 drs. given at each feed.

If this is digested, the amount is gradually increased.

The child's condition must be closely watched, with its rate of progress. This will be an indication of the quantity and strength of food required.

The feeding must be very regular, and small sips of water may be given between the feeds; the water should always be boiled and allowed to cool.

The bowels should be carefully watched. If they are constipated, this should be reported to the medical attendant. Olive oil is frequently given, in small prescribed quantities regularly to premature babies, and it is probable that the amount may be increased. If bowels are too relaxed, the amount of oil must be reduced.

Premature babies should lie in their warm cradles, and be as undisturbed as possible.

Complications may occur, therefore constant observation is necessary. Convulsions may supervene, and remedies should always be at hand, with a constant supply of hot water in readiness for any emergency.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss M. F. Irons, Miss M. Robinson, Miss M. E. Jones, Miss T. MacWilliam, Miss A. Ivens.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What is a civic nurse? Give an idea of her true relationship to the municipality and public health service.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)