

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

HOW WOULD YOU PREPARE THE FOLLOWING FOR THE SURGEON'S USE: GAUZE SPONGES, SILKWORM GUT, GUM-ELASTIC CATHETERS, SERUM SYRINGE, RUBBER GLOVES.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss E. O. Walford, Layer de la Haye, Colchester.

PRIZE PAPER.

GAUZE SPONGES.—These are liked in different shapes by different surgeons, two useful sizes being three to four inches square for the small ones, and six inches by nine inches for the larger or abdominal ones. About eight thicknesses of gauze are generally used, and if the edges are turned in and sewn, the sponges may be washed and re-sterilized several times. The small sponges should be tied together in packets of six, the larger in threes, to enable count of the number to be more readily kept during an operation. The required number of sponges should be placed in a sterilizing drum or bag, and dry-sterilized for half an hour.

After a *clean* operation the sponges may be collected and put to soak in some disinfectant. They should then be thoroughly washed, rinsed, and boiled for at least an hour. When dry, iron them, tie into packets, and sterilize as before.

SILKWORM GUT.—This is generally obtained in lengths of about twelve inches. It may either be twisted into rings, or fastened on glass slides, or placed in glass tubes supplied by any surgical instrument maker.

It should be sterilized by boiling in plain water for half an hour, and, if required for immediate use, should then be transferred to a sterile dish of sterile water; if not required immediately, store in carbolic 1-20.

GUM-ELASTIC CATHETERS.—Here again different surgeons prefer different methods of sterilization:—

(a) Place in carbolic 1-20, or perchloride of mercury 1-500, for ten minutes; transfer to sterile water.

(b) Place for twenty-four hours in a special tube containing paraform tablets in the rubber stopper.

(c) Other surgeons insist on having catheters boiled for three minutes, and then placed in some antiseptic, such as lysol 1 per cent. or carbolic 1-20, and say that though boiling shortens the life of the catheter, it is the only means which ensures a sterile catheter.

Also prepare: mackintosh, two sterile towels, swabs in lysol 1 per cent., measure-bowl for the urine, bowl for used swabs, a lubricant, such as sterile olive oil.

After Use.—Wash catheters thoroughly, running water through from the eye-end till quite clean; boil or soak in disinfectant; dry carefully. When dry, wipe with a piece of lint moistened with olive oil, and replace stilette, which should also be slightly oiled.

SERUM SYRINGE.—Prepare: syringe and two needles, dry sterile swabs, ether, iodine, small piece of sterile gauze, collodion.

First see the syringe is in good working order. Take it to pieces; place in a small sterilizer if one is kept specially for that purpose; if not, in an enamel bowl of water; and bring gradually to the boil. When boiling, put in the needles, which should be wrapped in lint to protect their points. Boil for five minutes, then transfer to *warm* sterile lotion.

Instead of boiling, the syringe may be placed in some antiseptic, such as lysol 2 per cent., or absolute alcohol, for at least an hour, but boiling is the safer method, and, if done carefully as directed, there is no risk of breaking.

After Use.—Wash carefully, syringing through with water to ensure the needle being absolutely clear. Sterilize, and dry thoroughly, running a little methylated spirit through the needle to secure evaporation of all moisture.

RUBBER GLOVES may be dry-sterilized or boiled.

For Dry Sterilization.—Well powder each glove inside and out, and place powdered lint in and between each to keep the rubber apart. Wrap each pair in lint, and place, together with a dredger or packet of powder, in a well-lined sterilizing drum. Sterilize for half an hour.

If to be Boiled.—Place the gloves in a holland bag, with a weight tacked in each corner to make it sink; drop into *plain* boiling water (soda water rots the rubber), and boil five to ten minutes. Transfer to a bowl of sterile water or lysol 1 per cent.

N.B.—Gloves must not be placed in the water till it is boiling, as the heat rots and thickens the rubber without sterilizing it.

After Use.—Soak in cold water; wash thoroughly; boil, rinse, dry, and mend carefully; powder well, and keep in a *cool* place.

Thick gloves are generally sterilized by soaking for one hour or longer in lysol 1 per cent.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss Alice M. Burns, Miss E. G. Andrews, Miss P. Thompson, Miss G. Heron, Miss M. Tracey.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What instruction in personal hygiene would you give a school child ten years of age?

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