

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE NURSE IN CARING FOR A CASE OF INFLUENZAL PNEUMONIA? WHAT PRECAUTIONS SHOULD SHE TAKE FOR HER OWN PROTECTION?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Theodosia Meade, Petteril Bank, Carlisle.

PRIZE PAPER.

Influenzal pneumonia being a form of acute septic pneumonia, throwing great strain on the heart, the two chief aims in its care are (1) to keep up the patient's strength and powers of resistance; (2) to dilute and carry off the poison.

(1) From the first the patient should be kept absolutely quiet, in a well-ventilated room, a free current of air being allowed around the bed, and, if the cough and heart symptoms admit of it, should be nursed in the flat position; no exertion of any kind must be permitted, the nurse performing the duties of washing, feeding, turning, &c., entirely. When the bedpan is required, the bed made, &c., assistance must be procured, and while one lifts the patient, the other does what is necessary, the patient not being allowed to lift or exert himself at all. The cough *must* be relieved by every possible means, as the strain of coughing weakens the heart.

Influenza being a depressing illness, the patient must be kept cheerful, and not allowed to get nervous or pessimistic about his condition.

The diet is of great importance, and should be light, nourishing, and easily digested; milk, beaten eggs, soup, &c., are usually given while the fever is high, gradually increasing to puddings, fish, &c., in convalescence. Everything given should be of high nutritive value, and the patient's rare desire for food or drink taken every advantage of.

Stimulants will be ordered by the doctor if required.

(2) The poisons from the body are carried away by four channels—the bowels, kidneys, skin, and lungs—and to assist these channels in their function is one of the chief parts of the treatment of septic diseases.

The *bowels* should be kept freely opened, to clear off the poisons and to keep the rectum and lower bowel clear, so that, if necessary, a saline would be easily retained. Care must be taken in the use of enemata that the rectum does not get irritated, in case nutrients have to be resorted to.

The *kidneys* must be kept well flushed, plenty of water and bland drinks being given.

The *pores of the skin* should be kept open and clear by sponging at *least* twice daily. This is of great importance, as it also helps to lower the temperature.

The *mouth and throat* must be kept clean with an antiseptic mouthwash and gargle used repeatedly. Care must be taken to prevent the mouth, tongue, and lips from getting sore, and a mixture of glycerine and boracic, lemon, or thymol applied regularly.

Other symptoms and any complications must be treated as they arise.

Ex. *Hyperpyrexia*—by cold sponging, packs, &c. The nurse should remember that influenzal pneumonia, being a highly infectious disease, all discharges from the patient must be disinfected and burnt, and the sputum received into a disinfectant solution; the clothes, &c., disinfected before washing. Also that, in a fatal case, the patient's body is infectious after death, and must be treated accordingly.

It is the nurse's duty to take every precaution for her own protection against influenzal pneumonia. Good regular meals, proper rest and sleep, a daily bath and outdoor exercise are essential; she should gargle frequently with a good antiseptic.

One of the new "influenza masks" may also be worn with advantage when attending to the patient; also a washable overall.

Mrs. Dodd writes:—"The fact that influenzal pneumonia is highly infectious, necessitates that all things used by the patient should be kept apart from those used by other members of the household. It is a good plan to mark all utensils and cloths used for washing-up purposes. . . . One of the after-effects of influenzal pneumonia is extreme weakness and lack of energy. A patient stands a far better chance of complete recovery by 'making haste slowly,' and receiving the full benefit of a few more days' good nursing than may appear necessary."

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss J. McNeillie, Miss R. E. S. Cox, Miss D. J. Wallace, Miss Frances Waugh, Miss Winifred Appleton, Miss Hilda Smith, Mrs. J. Dodd, Miss Kathleen A. Fyson, Miss Louisa K. Clarke.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What do you know of erysipelas and its origin? What are the principal nursing points?

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