

MEDICAL MATTERS.

ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA.

The Memorandum on encephalitis lethargica issued by the Ministry of Health concludes with the following statement as to the precautions which it is desirable that the individual to take against infection:—

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST INFECTION.

The other occupants of a house in which a case of encephalitis has occurred or is being treated may be assured that the disease is one of low infectivity, and that very little risk is run by association with the patient. At the same time it is desirable that such association should be limited to what is necessary for proper care and nursing, and the patient should be well isolated in a separate room.

School-children in the affected household may be kept from school, as a precautionary measure, for three weeks after the isolation of the patient. There is no necessity to place restriction on the movements of other occupants, provided they are frequently examined and remain well. Those in contact with the case, however, should be advised to use antiseptic nasal sprays or douches, and to gargle the throat with solutions such as those advised for influenza.

For example, any of the following may be used:

- (1) 1 per cent. solution of peroxide of hydrogen;
- (2) a solution of permanganate of potash, 1 in 5,000, in 0.8 per cent. solution of chloride of sodium (common salt);
- (3) liquor sodæ chlorinatæ, 0.5 per cent. These solutions can be used as ordinary throat gargles or snuffed up the nostrils, or applied by an efficient spray.

Any persons in the infected household who suffer from sore throat or other symptoms suggesting an abortive attack should, it is stated lastly, be treated from this point of view and isolated as far as possible until they have recovered. The sick room must be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected at the end of the illness.

THE VALUE OF FRUIT IN INVALID DIET.

Fruits, when eaten fresh, are valuable for their acids and for the mineral matter which they contain. They also give bulk to the diet, which is an important factor. This is especially true of fruits which have been dried. Dried fruits also have a higher concentrated fuel value. The cooling, appetising and refreshing qualities of fresh fruits give them an increased value in invalid diet.

Nearly all fruits have a laxative effect. Apples act upon the liver and kidneys, and figs and prunes are both valuable laxatives. Pineapple is often given to diabetic patients. It

contains a digestive ferment similar to pepsin, and has a decided effect on the digestion of proteids. Pineapple juice is given in diphtheria, and in cases of sore throat from other causes, and has a soothing effect on the mucous membranes of the throat. Bananas contain starch, and are therefore more digestible if cooked.

Oranges are more often used than almost any other fruit for the invalid, and they may be served in a number of ways to give variety. A patient soon tires of seeing the orange appear on the tray, simply cut in half and served with an orange spoon. Instead, try peeling the orange and arranging the quarters, which have been separated, on a plate in such a way that they represent the petals of a flower. In the centre, where the petals come together, put a mound of powdered sugar with a marischino cherry on top. This may be varied by peeling the orange in such a manner that a band of skin, one-half inch wide, is left midway between the two ends. Separate the sections, cutting the band with a knife, and arrange around a mound of sugar with the skin portion up. The orange is picked up by this band of skin when eaten. If a patient tires of oranges and chilled orange juice, a baked orange may be given for a change. Cut an orange in half crosswise, place on a baking dish, sprinkle sugar on each half, and bake in a moderate oven until tender. This will take about twenty minutes. The orange may be served either hot or cold, and has a flavour somewhat resembling orange marmalade.

Baked peaches are delicious, and make a nice change after a patient has had the fresh fruit frequently enough to become tired of it. Peel a peach, cut it in half and remove the stone. Fill the cavity thus left with sugar and a few drops of lemon juice. Bake in a shallow pan for about twenty minutes, and serve hot or cold. Baked bananas make an attractive dessert to serve for luncheon. Remove the skin from a banana, and cut in half lengthwise. Put in a shallow pan with a little butter, lemon juice and sugar, and bake about twenty minutes in a moderate oven, basting several times with a mixture of sugar, water and lemon juice. Brown sugar makes an especially good combination with bananas, and a sauce made of butter and brown sugar creamed together gives a finishing touch to baked bananas when they are served hot.

Prunes are a very common article of invalid diet, and they are something one soon tires of, for they are nearly always served the same way—stewed. When the doctor orders prunes for a patient, the nurse feels in duty bound to serve

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)