

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE THREE PRINCIPAL METHODS OF FEEDING INFANTS? WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF OVER-FEEDING, AND WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss M. M. G. Bielby, Cranford, Middlesex.

PRIZE PAPER.

The three principal methods of feeding infants are: (i) *Breast-feeding*; (ii) *Wet-nursing*; (iii) *Bottle-feeding*, with an imitation of human milk; or cow's milk.

(i) Of these the first method is incomparably the best. (a) Because it is Nature's own plan; without loss through sterilization; (b) the milk is at the right, and uniform, temperature; (c) it is the simplest method, obviating the troublesome task of preparing a pure food for the infant. When the mother is unable to suckle the child the inability may be remedied by the use of a galactagogue during the later months of pregnancy, and through lactation; or by taking Glaxo daily. Undeveloped nipples should be drawn out during pregnancy. Tea and coffee have an inhibitory effect in some cases. Insufficiency of breast milk should be supplemented by alternate feeds of Glaxo, or the "Allenbury's" Infant Food No. 1. Experience has shown that where the mother's milk does not suit the infant, a saltspoonful of Albulactin given before each feed will aid digestion. In no case should breast-feeding be abandoned until all measures to achieve its success have been tried, so great is the advantage the breast-fed infant has over the artificially-fed child.

The best authorities now advise a feed every three hours during the day, and no feed between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Very delicate infants may require feeding two-hourly, and once during the night. The feeds must be given by the clock, rousing the child when necessary.

(ii) *Wet-nursing*. If this method should be decided upon by the medical attendant care should be taken to select a woman of good character, between the ages of 25 and 35. She should be in perfect health and free from any taint; preferably a happy woman, and a total abstainer. Her own infant should not be more than three months old; her temperament should be placid. The same punctuality should be observed; and cleanliness concerning the nipples. She should live and sleep in pure air and her diet should be very simple.

(iii) *Bottle-feeding*. Sometimes the doctor orders artificial human milk for the infant.

That prepared according to the formula of Dr. W. S. Playfair has given excellent results. Certain large dairy companies also supply humanised milk in sealed bottles. Both these forms of milk involve considerable trouble and expense. One of the best and cheapest infant foods now procurable is Glaxo, which is cows' milk so treated that it is germ-free, and contains 25 per cent. of butter-fat; the curd forming in tiny flakes in the stomach instead of as a solid mass. Being in powder form, requiring only the addition of boiled water, it is most suitable for poor homes and busy mothers. Dried milks are also prepared by dairies.

The "Allenburys'" Infant Foods; Albulactin; and unsweetened condensed milk are all good substitutes for breast-feeding. Failing these, sterilised milk, or cow's milk and barley-water may be used, though lack of cleanliness at its source may make cow's milk dangerous. In all bottle-feeding strict cleanliness is essential, using only the boat-shaped bottle with teats that can be turned inside out, e.g., Ingram or Glaxo teats. The food must be freshly prepared and given at blood-heat.

The symptoms of over-feeding are returning food immediately after a feed; vomiting; diarrhoea; stools of undigested curd; flatus; constipation; sore buttocks; profuse perspiration; a rash or other skin trouble; strongly-smelling urine, and anguished crying. A baby who doubles his birth weight during the first four months is probably overfed. All these symptoms point to an overworked digestive system, which in turn throws overwork on to the kidneys. Permanent injury to the digestion, the brain and nervous system; overheated blood; restlessness, suffering during dentition; convulsions; spots on the skin; and rickets are some results of over-feeding.

A teaspoonful of boiled, warm water should be given to an infant suffering from thirst.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss B. James, Miss T. Collier.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What are the principal dangers to health in hot and dry weather? What precautions should be taken to avert them?

The full official reports of the work of the Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem during the war have been issued by H.M. Stationery Office. They fill a volume of 823 pages, the price of which is 12s. 6d. net. "Paid and volunteer nursing are exhaustively dealt with, to which we shall refer again.

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