

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT POINTS WOULD YOU EMPHASISE IN GIVING PRE-NATAL INSTRUCTION, AND WHAT SPECIAL MATTERS WOULD YOU ATTEND TO IN GIVING POST-NATAL CARE?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Mildred W. Comer, Room 16, Town Hall, Bournemouth.

PRIZE PAPER.

(a) Expectant mothers should be advised on the following subjects:—

Clothing should be warm and light, woollen underclothing preferably; petticoats and skirts arranged so that very little pressure falls on the waist. It is advisable that clothing should be made to hang from the shoulders. It is better to omit corsets, but if this cannot be persuaded, great care must be taken that there is no injurious pressure on the waist and breasts; the effect on the latter would cause flattened nipples.

Women who have had several children may have lax abdominal wall, causing the enlarged uterus to fall forward. In this case a proper abdominal belt should be advised. It is important to impress that tight bands and clothing are dangerous, as the heart, lungs, and kidneys have extra work to do, and anything likely to impede their action must be abandoned.

Garters must not be worn. If veins of the legs are enlarged, the legs should be carefully bandaged and the patient advised to elevate them when sitting down.

A nourishing diet, with the addition of fruit, vegetables, brown bread, and plenty of water, should be advised, and all highly seasoned, indigestible food avoided. Bowels should be daily regulated, no strong purgatives taken. A daily exercise of walking—not too far to cause fatigue—should be encouraged.

Dancing, cycling, or using a sewing machine strongly forbidden.

Advise special care at the time a period would have come on, as miscarriage is likely to occur about that time.

If possible, a warm bath should be taken daily, at night preferably. Special attention must be paid to the nipples and vulva; use plenty of soap and water.

Nipples must be carefully washed and dried daily. If tender and small or retracted, apply a little spirit and water to harden them. They should be gently massaged and drawn out to avoid the discomfort and danger of sore nipples.

Great care must be taken of the teeth; if

any tendency to decay, seek the advice of a qualified dentist.

The urine should be examined early in pregnancy and every succeeding month, and twice during the last month.

Any excessive sickness, swelling of feet, obstinate constipation, puffiness of face, persistent headache, loss of blood, however slight, or if the woman says she is menstruating regularly, should be at once reported to a doctor.

If there is any stunted growth, deformity of body, or history of previous abnormalities during pregnancy, labour, or lying-in, medical advice must be strongly urged.

(b) *Post-Natal Care.*—Strict asepsis must be observed during the puerperium, also when attending to the infant's umbilical cord. An aperient should be given to the mother on the second day and the amount of urine passed noted.

Temperature taken and charted twice daily. The character of the lochia noted daily. See that the uterus is contracting well. The breasts must be kept clean by swabbing with boracic lotion before and after suckling. Diet should be plentiful and nourishing.

See that the patient gets sufficient sleep.

If the child dies or conditions arise which forbid breast-feeding, a breast-pump should be used to draw off the milk, cotton wool applied over the breasts and bandaged firmly to the chest wall, and a saline purgative given night and morning.

Breast-feeding should be encouraged and its importance explained. Breast-milk is the natural food, and its constituents are in correct proportion and change in quantity and quality during lactation to suit the gradual development of the child. It is free from pathogenic organisms and is the correct temperature always. Breast-feeding causes uterine contractions which are advantageous to the mother.

If the breasts are full and heavy, they should be supported by a pad of wool and firm bandage.

The child should be washed and fed regularly, its eyes bathed three times a day, bowels well regulated; should get sufficient sleep and fresh air, gain weight—sleep in a cot always.

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Mrs. G. Firth Scott, Miss Rachel Dodd, Miss P. Thomson, Miss Jane Macintosh.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What do you know of the after-care and treatment of infantile paralysis?

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