

PRACTICAL HINTS



DISINFECTION IN PRIVATE DUTY.—In a private home, if contagion has taken the family by surprise and a room has not been especially prepared, leave in the room all the furniture and fittings in order that everything may be disinfected finally.

During the progress of the disease no blankets, coverings, etc., must ever be shaken from the windows. They can only be aired within the room, or rooms, occupied by the patient. Moist sheets hung *outside* the door leading to the rest of the house prevent the passage of dust from the sick-room. It is sufficient to keep them sprinkled with plain water, as the important thing is the moisture. However, a solution of carbolic may be used. They should be kept wet by some one on the clean side of the house. Soiled linen from the sick-room should be placed in a wash-boiler or metal can full of water, never taken to the laundry in a dry condition. Here also a weak solution of carbolic may be used, or a very weak solution of soda. However, plain water will be sufficient. They should be boiled for at least half an hour. Patients' dishes and silver should be kept in the room and before returning to the house should be boiled.

All cleaning within the patient's room during illness should be done with moist cloths, which should be put into paper bags and burnt.

Upon leaving the room the patient receives an unusually thorough bath, hair and all, with tincture of green soap, dilute alcohol rub, and final sponge-bath of bichloride of mercury 1 to 2000 to 1 to 4000 according to age.

The mode of disinfecting rooms is, generally, to use formaldehyde, which may be done in several ways. First, of course, all inside crevices and openings must be sealed. The druggists sell a paper specially prepared for this purpose which comes off easily. All clothing, bedding, etc., must be hung and spread about the room, bureau-drawers opened, and everything exposed to the fumes.

First Method.—Having procured from the druggist formaldehyde tablets, which come in sealed bottles, open and place them around the room in saucers. They will vaporize slowly, and this is often sufficient after slight infections.

Second Method.—Purchase liquid formaldehyde, providing about a half-pint pure fluid to one thousand cubic feet of space. Use this to make a solution of 1 to 1000 (a large glass graduate marked in the metric system is the simplest measure) and saturate large sheets in this solution. These should be hung about the room.

Third Method.—The formaldehyde lamp is especially designed for disinfection, and is all ready, filled and prepared to vaporize when needed. Any good druggist can get one. There is one firm which makes them, and this firm will also send a man to work it if desired. This method is generally used in wards; the other two, or combination of the two, in private houses.

Before setting free formaldehyde in any form the nurse should put on rubber gloves, glasses, and a thick mouth and nose protector, as the fumes are very irritating. After leaving the room she seals up the door and leaves all over night. Then thorough airing and house-cleaning. Mattresses and pillows had better be steam-sterilized if there is any sterilizing plant in the town, or, in the country, made over and sunned thoroughly.

M. D. P.