

NASAL AND AURAL HYGIENE.

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The hygiene of the upper respiratory passages and of their dependent aural apparatus is worthy of more attention than it has received. Its most important feature is, of course, the prevention of coryzas, universally recognized as of constitutional origin—a result of the so-called “pre-catarrhal state,” induced notably by confinement indoors and imperfect metabolism, the latter being a sequence of faulty diet.

But the care of the nose and ears as individual members should not be neglected. Let us consider some of the local sources of their derangement.

Trauma.—The injuries resulting from falls and blows in childhood are familiar to us as deflected septa, etc., and, naturally, are mostly unavoidable; in later life we learn to guard this tender organ with solicitude. Nevertheless, outside the foot-ball gridiron, who has not at times viewed with sympathetic alarm the rough handling of a ruby-colored nose by its possessor when afflicted with a coryza? At no other time does it need to be treated so gently by its owner, who, scores of times a day, grasps it as he would the handle of a garden rake, and after blowing it with an energy out of proportion to the occasion, finishes by wringing it like a fowl's neck. Hence the persistency of certain coryzas and the lasting nasal congestions set up, subsiding when the over-zealous use of the handkerchief is abandoned.

Patients should be instructed to blow gently *into* the handkerchief, not to grasp the nose and imitate the music of a cornet player.

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to state that the habit of picking the nose is like all habits originally induced by some unhealthy condition, local or general. Yet it *is* a habit after all, and one to be sternly eradicated.

Dust and Moisture.—There is much indifference to the evils of dust and very dry air. It seems well nigh impossible to get those thus exposed, especially those working where there are acrid chemical fumes, to wear a mask or inhaler. But like many other things, persistent use renders such apparatus tolerable, and their benefit is eventually appreciated if they are really efficacious. In offices heated by steam

there is commonly much complaint of the irritating dryness of the air—a condition easily remedied, but ignored, and doctors' bills incurred instead.

Bathing and Diving.—The oft-repeated warnings to surf-bathers, and particularly to those who dive, to protect their ears from the water by cotton plugs, etc., is not generally heeded, to judge by the damage often traced to its neglect. They who have lost the membrana need to be especially careful, and to give up diving. The tympanum is readily protected by the cotton plugs firmly introduced, but in diving even then the air in the nasal fossæ, accessory sinuses and naso-pharynx is compressed and partially escapes by the Eustachian tubes, and in consequence the water enters so far and high in the nasal fossæ as to painfully irritate the pituitary membrane, and leads to protracted congestion. Such a case has come under the writer's supervision.

Constitutional Hygiene.—A depreciated condition of the whole system, most frequently the result of sedentary occupations, is fully recognized as the most prolific cause of nasal and aural catarrh, and as contributing to this we may include tobacco and alcohol. What to do with the victims of the greed for money, who toil in offices no better than a Chinaman's shack, often puzzles the conscientious medical attendant. Better to cease his prescribing and give such patients a tactful lecture on how to live, and particularly how to get some exercise. Ay! there's the rub! Tell your banker patient, who has persistent nasal, gastric and duodenal catarrh, that he must exercise, and a cold, indifferent, bored expression comes upon his face. The word *exercise* is associated in his financial mind with chest-weights, dumbbells, horizontal bars, stiff muscles and *muscular work*, and he hates to use his muscles. Tell him that "the best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse," and he will reply, "Oh! I don't care for riding." The problem, in short, is to find some form of exercise that will, in the form of a game, such as hand-ball, basket-ball, etc., remind these men of failing powers of self-amusement that they actually were once boys, and gradually lead them on to make use of their neglected muscles. They who should not at first take active muscular exercise, should take it *passively*; i. e., they should be put in a hot room or steam box, or even a thermal bath, a gentle (at first) perspiration induced, and then have a "rub-down" from the attendant, and finally be showered off with cool water. The benefit derived from this, carried out, say three times a week, is very great, and is its own reward.

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