Motherhood

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KEEP WELL SERIES No. 8

TREASURY DEPARTMENT
UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
1919

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

MOTHERHOOD:

Safety and comfort can be ensured by adequate health supervision

Motherhood

EACH year nearly a quarter of a million babies die in the United States, a large number of which could have been saved.

One hundred thousand of these babies die in the first month of life, most of them because of conditions affecting the mother before baby was born. By giving proper care and attention to mothers before the baby is born, thousands of baby lives can be saved.

THOUSANDS OF MOTHERS LOSE THEIR LIVES NEEDLESSLY

But mothers should have better care for another important reason. In this country at least 15,000 mothers die in childbirth each year; that is one mother in every 150 cases of childbirth. Over half of them lose their lives from preventable conditions. What can we do to stop this awful sacrifice?

SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH OF EXPECTANT MOTHERS

Every expectant mother should early place herself under the care of a good physician or a well conducted obstetrical charity. If the expected baby is her first, the physical examination which the doctor makes should include measurements of the pelvis. An examination of the blood

by means of the Wassermann test shows that about 1 mother in every 10 should undergo thorough medical treatment in order to insure a healthy baby. Repeated examinations of the urine are essential for the detection of conditions whose early treatment may save the mother's life.

Before the baby is born the mother should safeguard her health in every way. She should be as far as possible relieved of worry, have plenty of fresh air, good, wholesome food, and sufficient recreation, rest, and sleep. The bowels should move once a day. Constipation, which is often troublesome during the later months of pregnancy, should preferably be controlled by regulating the diet, but if that does not suffice some simple laxative prescribed by the doctor should be taken. The clothing should be loose, though corsets may be worn during the earlier months.

During the last months of pregnancy, the expectant mother should see her physician or send him a specimen of her urine every two weeks. She must drink sufficient liquid to insure the passage of at least three pints of urine each 24 hours. Persistent or sudden and severe headaches, swelling of the face or hands, or increasing swelling of the ankles must be reported at once to the physician in charge. The appearance of a bloody discharge also demands instant summoning of the physician.

A number of patent medicines have been widely advertised to make childbirth safe, easy,

and painless. They are all frauds. Instead of wasting money on them, expectant mothers should seek a doctor's advice.

THE GREAT EVENT

At no time in her life does a woman require better care and attention than during childbirth. A competent doctor, or if such is not available, a properly supervised and licensed midwife should attend. The patient's room should be large, clean, and light, and the necessary maternity outfit should be conveniently at hand.

The following lists represent useful outfits:

List 1

1 pound absorbent cotton.
1 yard sterile gauze.
1 tube vaseline.
1 cake castile soap.
1 flannel band, 5 inches wide, 1 yard long.
6 bird's-eye diapers.
½ dozen small safety pins.
2 dozen large safety pins.
1 ounce powdered boracic acid.

List 2

1 pound absorbent cotton.
5 yards sterile gauze.
1 envelope sterile umbilical tapes.
1 dozen sterile sanitary napkins.
1 tube vaseline.
4 ounces powdered boracic acid.

1 dozen bird's-eye diapers.
1 flannel band, 5 inches wide, 1 yard long.
1 cake castile soap.
1 dozen small safety pins.
2 dozen large safety pins.
1 new douche bag, 2 quarts.
1 eye dropper.
1 douche pan.
1½ yards rubber nursery sheeting.

AFTER BABY COMES

The mother should rest in bed for at least a week after baby is born and for several weeks more should not do really heavy work. Various forms of serious female troubles are due to a failure to follow this advice.

The mother's food should be plentiful, wholesome, and nutritious, for, of course, baby must be nursed at the breast. The mother should drink plenty of milk, but much tea and coffee are injurious.

Almost all mothers can breast feed their babies.

If the flow of milk is scanty the mother should—

(*a*) Drink plenty of liquids, especially milk.
(*b*) Not do heavy work.
(*c*) Get sufficient rest and sleep.
(*d*) Take an outdoor airing every pleasant day.
(*e*) Avoid constipation.
(*f*) Put baby to nurse regularly.

In order to train the child and to keep herself well and strong, the mother should systematize baby's daily life, the nursing times, bath, sleep and outdoor periods. If the baby is often fretful the mother should seek the doctor's advice. Under no circumstances should she give soothing sirups or other patent medicines recommended by the neighbors.

Make sure that your baby's birth has been registered as it should be. If you are in doubt, ask the health officer.

For helpful articles on baby care and other important health subjects, apply to your health officer or write to the United States Public Health Service, Washington, D. C.

Other Publications on Baby Care

THE CARE OF THE BABY

No. 10 Supplement to Public Health Reports

THE SUMMER CARE OF INFANTS

No. 16 Supplement to Public Health Reports

THE TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE BY FLIES

No. 29 Supplement to Public Health Reports

A HOMEMADE MILK REFRIGERATOR

No. 102 Public Health Bulletin

BREAST FEEDING HER BABY

No. 9 Keep Well Series

BOTTLE FEEDING FOR BABIES

No. 10 Keep Well Series

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