

THE TREATMENT OF PEDICULOSIS CAPITIS

BY MARGARET C. REILLY, R. N. IN "*The Trained Nurse and Hospital Review*."

More useless treatments are recommended for pediculosis capitis by doctors, nurses and "the kind neighbour" than for any other common skin disease. Most of these treatments are time consuming, some are harmful and do not produce results. After working for several years on this particular problem and eliminating one by one the "cure alls" we have at last a treatment that will give the desired results.

To kill Lice and Nits

EQUIPMENT.

Rubber apron for patient's shoulders
One two-quart pitcher
One hand basin
One towel for cap
Small towel for patient's eyes,

Pour one pint of carbolic acid, 1-20, into a pitcher and to this add one pint of hot water.

TREATMENT.

Place apron around patient's shoulders. Tie towel over patient's eyes. Place patient's head over basin. Pour carbolic solution 1-40 over the hair. Catch solution in basin, pour it back into pitcher and repeat treatment until hair is thoroughly soaked. Allow hair to drip over basin a few seconds and then tie up patient's head in a towel for one hour. There is no danger of dermatitis from this treatment.

This treatment can be used in the hospital or home when immediate results are necessary. The patient is no longer a menace to other patients after treatment, all the nits and lice are dead. It can be used with safety in the home by an intelligent person. If the parent is to do the treatment for many children it is simpler to recommend just the following treatment:

To remove Lice and Nits from Head.

EQUIPMENT.

Special Soap
Special Comb
Hand Basin.

TREATMENT.

Place patient's head over basin of hot water, holding the soap in the hand and using very hot water. Make a thick lather all over the head. Rinse the hair and repeat. Tie up the hair for five minutes (if a carbolic

shampoo has been given) otherwise tie up the hair for one hour. Then rinse the hair just enough to make combing easy. Holding up a strand of the hair, start underneath from the roots and comb upwards. To remove the nits it is necessary that the hair be wet. If combing is done thoroughly one treatment will rid the hair of all nits. All nits must be removed before a head can be pronounced clean. Unless the carbolic treatment is given the nits and lice are not dead.

It is not always possible to have the above equipment at hand, for that reason I demonstrate to our nurses the following method of ridding the hair of nits.

The shampoo with carbolic solution is given and is followed by a soap and water shampoo using any good soap that makes a lather.

EQUIPMENT.

Ordinary fine tooth comb

Two and one-half yards of fine copper wire, size 28 covered with silk thread.

Starting at lower left end of comb make two turns from bottom to top of comb to secure wire and then tie up in groups every sixth tooth. This makes the teeth of the comb so fine that the nits are caught between the wired teeth. The combing of the hair is the same as for the commercial steel comb. The secret of this whole treatment is to comb the hair while it is wet. To clean comb soak in solution of carbolic acid, 1-20 for one hour. Nits can be then dislodged from comb by using a common pin. The manufactured comb when available should be used, for it is much more practicable; it can be sterilized and lasts indefinitely.

The present treatment of pediculosis capitis is simple and efficacious. It is well for the nurse to bear in mind the complications of pediculosis capitis, *i.e.* infected glands and impetigo contagious. Enlarged glands due to pediculosis rarely need to be incised and disappear when head is rid of vermin. Impetigo, a frequent complication, cannot be cured until the patient has had a thorough treatment for pediculosis.

"How to avoid Typhoid"—

1. By staying away from typhoid patients.
2. Preventing sick persons from handling food.
3. Remember not to swallow water when swimming.
4. Subscribing for safe milk, and pure water supplies.
5. Sending typhoid patients to hospital the first week.
6. Refusing to drink from any well or spring that may admit drainage.
7. Appreciating that a case of uncontrolled typhoid may produce an epidemic.
8. Teaching children how diseases are caused, spread, controlled and avoided.
9. Co-operating with local boards of health by having all cases reported and controlled.
10. Getting vaccinated and thereby further safeguarding one's self and family.