

**HYGIENE OF CHILDHOOD,
OR, THE CARE OF
CHILDREN THROUGHOUT
CHILDHOOD AND PUBERTY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649259342

Hygiene of childhood, or, The care of children throughout childhood and puberty by Francis H. Rankin

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

FRANCIS H. RANKIN

**HYGIENE OF CHILDHOOD,
OR, THE CARE OF
CHILDREN THROUGHOUT
CHILDHOOD AND PUBERTY**

HYGIENE OF CHILDHOOD

OR

THE CARE OF CHILDREN THROUGHOUT
CHILDHOOD AND PUBERTY,

BY
LANE LIBRARY

FRANCIS H. RANKIN, M. D.

ONE OF A SERIES OF LECTURES GIVEN BY THE MEDICAL BOARD
OF THE NEWPORT HOSPITAL, 1885-86.



NEWPORT, R. I.
DAVIS & PITMAN, PRINTERS,

1886:

h

LANE LIBRARY

R 21
1886

HYGIENE OF CHILDHOOD.*

BY

FRANCIS H. RANKIN, M. D.

In my lecture on the care of infants, I endeavored to point out the importance of certain rules and regulations, which are necessary for the proper maintenance of health throughout the period of infancy. I tried to impress upon you the importance of the formation of regular habits at an early age, and also of the necessity of a full amount of sleep at regular hours, of a carefully selected and variety of simple food given at stated intervals, the protection of the body from chill by proper clothing, pure air to breathe indoors, and cleanliness.

In my lecture to-day, it will be my aim to show you that it is equally important to enforce these rules throughout childhood, that the development of the child may not be retarded or interfered with.

Infancy includes the space of time from birth to the completion of the first dentition, about two and a half years, when childhood may be properly said to begin. The little one can now make known its wants and discomforts, the dangers incident to dentition are over, the nervous system is less susceptible to all impressions, and not so easily disturbed by injudicious feeding or exposure to cold, both of which are so disastrous at an earlier age.

In proportion to the proper guidance and attention given the child during the earlier years of life, will

*A Lecture (with additional notes) to mothers and nurses, given at the Newport Hospital, December 19th, 1886.

depend the strength of its body at maturity. This question, the care of children, is so profound, that I can but briefly touch upon some of the essential points. The moral, mental, and physical training are equally important, but time forbids me to dwell upon them all. I wish however to suggest one thought for your consideration, namely, that the moral welfare of a being, is very often dependent upon, or influenced by, the physical and mental condition. With a healthy body and healthy nerve force, there is far less likelihood of a bad state of morals, than when the physical system is imperfect, when the digestive organs have been perverted by improper and too stimulating food, and the nerve force exhausted by too profound mental work, and an insufficient amount of sleep during the period of youth.

During these important years, when the child is rapidly developing, no pains should be spared to establish habits of regularity. They are essential to a healthy existence. When once fairly established, nature's love for order will create a desire in the child to continue these habits. That which at first may have been difficult to implant, takes deep and permanent root.

Simplicity of food is essential to good digestion. In order that the functions of digestion may be properly carried on, only such food should be given as the digestive organs can digest or dissolve with ease, and put in a form that the absorbents can take up, and then allow a period of rest before the next meal. By rest, I mean a period of time when the glands, whose duty it is to manufacture the digestive

fluids, are not in active operation. This glandular activity ceases only when there is no food in the stomach, or when the food is in a condition for absorption. If the due amount of rest is not obtained, then these glands are kept too long in a state of congestion,* and soon cease to do their work properly, and there is resulting what is commonly called an attack of indigestion, the stomach and bowels become irritable, and we have ensuing loss of appetite and strength, fever, pain, vomiting, diarrhœa, etc. It is just as absurd to expect that the stomach of a child should be capable of digesting the same hearty kinds of food as the adult, as to expect that its arms should lift as heavy weight, or its legs should carry it as fast or as far.

During the early years of childhood, that is from two to six years of age, milk should constitute a greater portion of the food; of course farinaceous food, easily digestible vegetables, good ripe fruit, eggs, and meat should be given. The importance of the latter article, meat, is however apt to be overestimated during early life. A little fresh meat once a day should be given, but except from ill health, and by the advice of a physician, a child under seven, should never have meat more than once a day.

Children during school life must be well fed, for

*As I shall use the word congestion frequently in this lecture, I wish you to clearly understand its true meaning. By congestion is meant, that a greater amount of blood is supplied to the part in question, than is the case when the part is in a state of repose or inactivity. When any one function of the body is called into activity, as the brain in thinking, the stomach or intestinal canal in digesting, the liver or any of the various glands or organs of the body in the performance of their duty, there instantly takes place an accession of blood at the point of increased activity, a healthy state of congestion takes place. If, however, this congestion is too long maintained from the excessive amount of work required, the healthy action of the gland or organ is interfered with, and a diseased state is the result.

not only is the growth rapid, but there is a great wear and tear of body and mind, both at work and at play. If they are not properly nourished at this critical time they develop badly, their blood becomes poor, and hereditary tendencies are encouraged. Variety and palatability of food must be studied as well as regularity of meals. At this period, that is after six or seven years of age, it is always important to see that the interval between meals is not too long, for by prolonged fasting many are very much injured. A glass of milk, or a little bread and butter between breakfast and dinner, or between dinner and supper, is a great help in maintaining strength and vigor, and very important to a child who is delicate or whose appetite is small.

A child requires a great deal of fat and nerve making food: in milk we have both these requisites. Oatmeal contains a large amount of phosphate of lime and soda, the yolk of an egg also contains phosphates, important articles at this age to build up bone. All farinaceous articles are more or less fat making. Meat is essentially a nitrogenous article of diet, it builds up the muscles, but as we have in farinaceous food, white of eggs and milk, also muscle-making or nitrogenous elements, a large amount of meat is not necessary. On the contrary it is actually injurious, as, if it forms the greater part of the meal, it thereby deprives the system of the fat and nerve making food, which is so essential for animal heat and nerve force, and it moreover acts as an irritant upon the bowels and kidneys. Many of you have doubtless noticed, that young children who are large meat eaters are very slender, prone to have coated tongues, foul

breath, indigestion, and to talking in their sleep. Whereas those whose food consists largely of milk, farinaceous food, light vegetables, and only a judicious amount of meat, are fatter, have a healthy complexion, rosier cheeks, and are generally of a happier and brighter disposition. As the boy or girl approaches the age of eight or nine, when they are full of life and vigor, meat is generally required more than once a day, that is meat with the dinner and a little in the morning for breakfast. Be careful, however, and do not let meat diet crowd out the other varieties of food. It is well to teach children, when they are old enough to take hearty food, to eat the fat of meat. Fat is important for developing nerve force. It is also essential for keeping up animal heat, and furnishes the basis of all cell nutrition. By fat we do not mean grease. The natural fat that is taken with meat, milk, and butter, is wholesome and desirable for the child, and is very easily assimilated; but grease, like meat gravies, and all kinds of food fried in grease, is indigestible and should never be given to a child.

In proportion to its size, the child requires a greater amount of hydrocarbon or heat food, than the fully developed man; this is necessary in order to supply the wants required in growth, and the force expended in restless activity. In addition to fat, we have another element which is heat making, namely sugar, and also, to a slight degree, the starch of farinaceous food, for the starch is converted into sugar in the system. The natural craving for sweets is perhaps more than the desire to gratify the palate, it is the craving upon the part of nature for carbo-hydrates.