

Diet During Pregnancy

336. It is an error generally committed to make no difference in the life of a woman previous to the birth of her children. At this important period the labor of the mother should be lightened. Great changes are going on in her system. It requires a greater amount of blood, and therefore an increase of food of the most nourishing quality to convert into blood. Unless she has an abundant supply of nutritious food, she cannot retain her physical strength, and her offspring is robbed of vitality.

Her clothing also demands attention. Care should be taken to protect the body from a sense of chilliness. She should not call vitality unnecessarily to the surface to supply the want of sufficient clothing.

If the mother is deprived of an abundance of wholesome, nutritious food, she will lack in the quantity and quality of blood. Her circulation will be poor and her child will lack in the very same things. There will be an inability in the offspring to appropriate food which it can convert into good blood to nourish the system. The prosperity of mother and child depends much upon good, warm clothing, and a supply of nourishing food. The extra draft upon the vitality of the mother must be considered and provided for.

But, on the other hand, the idea that women, because of their special condition, may let the appetite run riot, is a mistake based on custom, but not on sound sense. The appetite of women in this condition may be variable, fitful, and difficult to gratify; and custom allows her to have anything she may fancy, without consulting reason as to whether such food can supply nutrition for her body and for the growth of her child. The food should be nutritious, but should not be of an exciting quality.

Custom says that if she wants flesh meats, pickles, spiced food, or mince pies, let her have them; appetite alone is to be consulted. This is a great mistake, and does much harm. The harm cannot be estimated. If ever there is need of simplicity of diet and special care as to the quality of food eaten, it is in this important period.

Women who possess principle, and who are well instructed, will not depart from simplicity of diet at this time of all others. They will consider that another life is dependent upon them, and will be careful in all their habits, and especially in diet. They should not eat that which is innutritious and exciting, simply because it tastes good. There are too many counselors ready to persuade them to do things which reason would tell them they ought not to do.

Diseased children are born because of the gratification of appetite by the parents. The system did not demand the variety of food upon which the mind dwelt. Because once in the mind it must be in the stomach, is a great error which Christian women should reject. Imagination should not be allowed to control the wants of the system. Those who allow the taste to rule, will suffer the penalty of transgressing the laws of their being. And the matter does not end here; their innocent offspring also will be sufferers.

The blood-making organs cannot convert spices, mince pies, pickles, and diseased flesh meats into good blood. And if so much food is taken into the stomach that the digestive organs

Diet in Pregnancy

are compelled to overwork in order to dispose of it, and to free the system from irritating substances, the mother does injustice to herself, and lays the foundation of disease in her offspring. If she chooses to eat as she pleases, and what she may fancy, irrespective of consequences, she will bear the penalty, but not alone. Her innocent child must suffer because of her indiscretion. CD 220

Effects of Overwork and Impoverished Diet

337. The mother, in many cases previous to the birth of her children, is permitted to toil early and late, heating her blood. . . . Her strength should have been tenderly cherished. . . . Her burdens and cares are seldom lessened, and that period, which should be to her of all others a time of rest, is one of fatigue, sadness, and gloom. By too great exertion on her part, she deprives her offspring of that nutrition which nature has provided for it, and by heating her own blood, she imparts to it a bad quality of blood. The offspring is robbed of its vitality, robbed of physical and mental strength.

338. I was shown the course of B in his own family. He has been severe and overbearing. He adopted the health reform as advocated by Brother C, and, like him, took extreme views of the subject; and not having a well-balanced mind, he has made terrible blunders, the results of which time will not efface. Aided by items gathered from books, he commenced to carry out the theory he had heard advocated by Brother C, and like him, made a point of bringing all up to the standard he had erected. He brought his own family to his rigid rules, but failed to control his own animal propensities. He failed to bring himself to the mark, and keep his body under. If he had had a correct knowledge of the system of health reform, he would have known that his wife was not in a condition to give birth to healthy children. His own unsubdued passions had borne sway without reasoning from cause to effect.

Before the birth of his children, he did not treat his wife as a woman in her condition should be treated. . . . He did not provide the quality and quantity of food that was necessary to nourish two lives instead of one. Another life was dependent upon her, and her system did not receive the nutritious wholesome food necessary to sustain her strength. There was a lack in the quantity and in the quality. Her system required changes, a variety and quality of food that was more nourishing. Her children were born with feeble digestive powers and impoverished blood. From the food the mother was compelled to receive, she could not furnish a good quality of blood, and therefore gave birth to children filled with humors. [what we would call toxins]CD 221

Counsel Based on Divine Instruction

339. The inquiry of fathers and mothers should be, "What shall we do unto the child that shall be born unto us?" We have brought before the reader what God has said concerning the course of the mother before the birth of her children. But this is not all. The angel Gabriel was sent from the heavenly courts to give directions for the care of children after their birth, that parents might fully understand their duty.

About the time of Christ's first advent the angel Gabriel came to Zacharias with a message

Diet in Pregnancy

similar to that given to Manoah. The aged priest was told that his wife should bear a son, whose name should be called John. "And," said the angel, "thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." This child of promise was to be brought up with strictly temperate habits. An important work of reform was to be committed to him, to prepare the way for Christ.

Intemperance in every form existed among the people. Indulgence in wine and luxurious food was lessening physical strength, and debasing the morals to such an extent that the most revolting crimes did not appear sinful. The voice of John was to sound forth from the wilderness in stern rebuke for the sinful indulgences of the people, and his own abstemious habits were also to be a reproof of the excesses of his time.

The efforts of our temperance workers are not sufficiently far-reaching to banish the curse of intemperance from our land. Habits once formed are hard to overcome. The reform should begin with the mother before the birth of her children; and if God's instructions were faithfully obeyed, intemperance would not exist.

It should be the constant effort of every mother to conform her habits to God's will, that she may work in harmony with Him to preserve her children from the health and life destroying vices of the present day. Let mothers place themselves without delay in right relations to their Creator, that they may by His assisting grace build around their children a bulwark against dissipation and intemperance. If mothers would but follow such a course, they might see their children, like the youthful Daniel, reach a high standard in moral and intellectual attainments, becoming a blessing to society and an honor to their Creator. CD 225

The Infant

340. The best food for the infant is the food that nature provides. Of this it should not be needlessly deprived. It is a heartless thing for a mother, for the sake of convenience or social enjoyment, to seek to free herself from the tender office of nursing her little one. CD 226 Health Reformer, September, 1871

341. In order to keep pace with fashion, nature has been abused, instead of being consulted. Mothers sometimes depend upon a hireling, or a nursing bottle must be substituted, for the maternal breast. And one of the most delicate and gratifying duties a mother can perform for her dependent offspring, which blends her life with its own, and which awakens the most holy feelings in the hearts of women, is sacrificed to fashion's murderous folly.

Nor is this all. She also imparts her temper and her temperament to the nursing child. The child's life is linked to hers. If the hireling is a coarse type of woman, passionate and unreasonable; if she is not careful in her morals, the nursling will be, in all probability, of the same or similar type. The same coarse quality of blood, coursing in the veins of the hireling nurse, is in that of the child. Mothers who will thus turn their children from their arms, and refuse the maternal duties, because they are a burden which they cannot well sustain, while devoting their lives to fashion, are unworthy the name of mother. They degrade the noble instincts and holy attributes of women, and choose to be butterflies of fashionable pleasure,

Diet in Pregnancy

having less sense of their responsibility to their posterity than the dumb brutes. Many mothers substitute the bottle for the breast. This is necessary because they have not nourishment for their children. But in nine cases out of ten their wrong habits of dressing, and of eating from their youth, have brought upon them inability to perform the duties nature designed they should. . . . It ever has appeared to me to be cold, heartless business for mothers who can nurse their children to turn them from the maternal breast to the bottle. In that case, the greatest care is necessary to have the milk from a healthy cow, and to have the bottle, as well as the milk, perfectly sweet. This is frequently neglected, and as the result, the infant is made to suffer needlessly. Disturbances of the stomach and bowels are liable to occur, and the much-to-be-pitied infant becomes diseased, if it were healthy when born. CD 227

342. The period in which the infant receives its nourishment from the mother, is critical. Many mothers, while nursing their infants, have been permitted to overlabor, and to heat their blood in cooking, and the nursing has been seriously affected, not only with fevered nourishment from the mother's breast, but its blood has been poisoned by the unhealthy diet of the mother, which has fevered her whole system, thereby affecting the food of the infant. The infant will also be affected by the condition of the mother's mind. If she is unhappy, easily agitated, irritable, giving vent to outbursts of passion, the nourishment the infant receives from its mother will be inflamed, often producing colic, spasms, and, in some instances, causing convulsions and fits.

The character also of the child is more or less affected by the nature of the nourishment received from the mother. How important then that the mother, while nursing her infant, should preserve a happy state of mind, having the perfect control of her own spirit. By thus doing, the food of the child is not injured, and the calm, self-possessed course the mother pursues in the treatment of her child has very much to do in molding the mind of the infant. If it is nervous, and easily agitated, the mother's careful, unhurried manner will have a soothing and correcting influence, and the health of the infant can be very much improved.

Infants have been greatly abused by improper treatment. If it was fretful, it has generally been fed to keep it quiet, when, in most cases, the very reason of its fretfulness was because of its having received too much food, made injurious by the wrong habits of the mother. More food only made the matter worse, for its stomach was already overloaded. CD 228.