

GENERAL RULES FOR BATHING.

1. A bath should never be taken when the stomach is actively engaged in digesting food; for in bathing the blood is sent to the surface in such quantities that the work of digestion would be retarded if it was taking place at the time of taking the bath. For the same reason, food should not be taken into the stomach immediately after a bath, nor until ample time has been allowed the system to react well. The most appropriate time to take a bath is about ten or eleven o'clock in the forenoon.

The system, as a general thing, is in better condition at that time than at any other of the day. The body has been refreshed by the morning meal, which, by that time, should be well digested, and it has not become wearied with the labors of the day. The bath may be taken on retiring for the night with the best of results, or in the afternoon. And on special occasions, when accident or sudden sickness seems to demand, it may be taken at any hour of the day or night.

2. Women should not take much treatment during the menstrual period; for a cold bath at that time would be very liable to check the menstrual function, and might

cause most serious consequences; while a hot bath would be liable to produce hemorrhage, and any form of a bath would be liable to overtax the system unless the bather was of the most robust constitution.

3. A bath should never be taken in such a manner as to produce cold feet, or headache; always wet the head with cool or cold water before taking the bath, and if the feet are cold, have a warm or hot bath for them.

4. Never bathe when the body is greatly fatigued; for proper reaction cannot then take place and the patient will be liable to chill, and so will not receive the benefit he otherwise would; yet a lively sponge-bath, or a plunge or shower-bath, would have a soothing effect, even if taken when the bather was somewhat tired, if he was not too much fatigued.

5. All general baths should be taken briskly, and the bather himself should rub vigorously, that he may quicken his circulation and respiration, and thus secure the warmth and reaction that is so essential after every bath.

6. A sheet is much better than a towel to dry the body after bathing, as it is so much larger. When possible, the bather should have an assistant to rub him while in the bath, and to dry him afterward. In drying the bather, the assistant should cover him with the sheet in such a manner as to completely envelop his body. He should then rub the body thoroughly, pressing the sheet down upon every part, drying it well; after this, the sheet, should be removed, and the assistant should rub the entire surface of the body well with the dry hand. It is always well to percuss or slap the flesh gently with the hand for one or two minutes after wiping dry with the sheet or towel. The entire process of drying the patient, and rubbing and percussing him until a good reaction takes place, ought not to occupy more than four or five minutes.

7. Whenever an invalid takes a bath, it should be in a warm room, so that he shall not chill. The temperature of the room should be from 70° to 85° Fahrenheit.

8. When the weather is suitable, the bather should take exercise in the open air immediately after his bath, unless he is too weak to do so. If the weather is not suitable, or if the bather is too feeble to take active exercise, he should retire to his room and cover up warm in bed for an hour or so, and sleep if possible.

9. None but the very strongest persons should bathe in cold water. Nervous individuals, and those who have weak digestive organs, or who have a feeble circulation, should not use even very cool water in bathing, neither should consumptives, nor those who are liable to hemorrhage, nor those who are just recovering from any severe acute disease. Not one in a thousand of the strongest men and women can take frequent cold baths without seriously damaging his health.
10. Always use a thermometer to determine the temperature of the bath for invalids.