

THE SPONGE OR HAND-BATH.

This bath is more easily administered than any other form of bath that can be given, as it can be taken in any room in the house, or may be given to very feeble patients even while in bed. All that is required is a basin of water, a sponge or soft cloth, and a towel, with a rug to spread on the carpet to prevent soiling it. A very good protector for the carpet can be very easily made. Take a piece of cotton cloth one and one-half yards square, and hem in a one-half inch rope around the edge. Then paint the cloth with two or three coats of white lead and boiled linseed oil; this will make it water tight, and the edges being raised by the rope will prevent any water from running over upon the carpet or floor. In taking the sponge-bath, have a bucket or large basin of water, which may be of any temperature that the conditions of the body may demand, into which dip the sponge, and on removing, squeeze it until it does not drip, and then wash the face, neck, head, and arms first, rubbing them vigorously. Then wipe dry. Next, wash the back, chest, and abdomen, and wipe in the same manner; after which, bathe the lower extremities in the same way. When this bath is given to the patient while in bed, as is often necessary with those who are very feeble,

begin with the head, and proceed in the same manner, always keeping the parts that have been dried well covered with the bedclothes. This is a bath of universal application, there being no patient so feeble that it may not be administered with safety, provided the water is of the right degree of temperature. It will cleanse the skin thoroughly, and will equalize the circulation by inducing a gentle reaction to the entire surface. It will relieve congestion of the internal organs by inducing an increased circulation in the surface. It will subdue fever and allay inflammation by reducing the temperature of the body; and it will give a general feeling of freshness to the entire system. It will also soothe the nerves, if they are excited, as nothing else will, and will produce quiet, rest, and sleep many times when all other things fail. This bath may be given with the naked hand, and is, when given thus, a milder form of the bath than when given with the sponge, as less water is applied to the patient's body.

The Hygienic Family Physician: A Complete Guide for the Preservation of Health, and the Treatment of the Sick without Medicine, pg. 132-134 by M. G. Kellogg