

## **GENERAL CAUSES OF FEVER.**

These may be stated in general terms to be anything that will cause a clogging or weakening of any of the purifying organs, thereby causing them to cease their work, and, as a consequence, causing the body to become filled with retained excretions. The fever is nothing more nor less than an attempt on the part of the organism to purify the system by exciting undue activity in various parts, thereby disturbing all the organic functions. The cause may be local contagions, or poisons, impure water or unhealthful food, foul air, personal uncleanliness, overwork, worry of mind, exposure, gluttony, intemperance, or starvation.

## **GENERAL TREATMENT OF FEVER.**

It will be readily understood that in treating fever— the object being to restore the patient to health— the treatment should begin at the very outset of the disease, and that it should be such as the conditions of the patient indicate. Let us examine these conditions. 1. There is languor and weakness. 2. The appetite is defective. This is because the food cannot be used in building up the tissues, as

they are engaged in other work— the disease— therefore the system makes no demand for food, but loathes it. 3. There is nausea, caused by morbid matter in the stomach. 4. There is usually a constipated state of the bowels. 5. There is headache, with a slight sensation of chilliness. These are the premonitory symptoms of fever in nearly every form and case that occurs, and they should not go unheeded for a moment.

If proper treatment is adopted as soon as these symptoms begin to manifest themselves, the disease may be so modified— if not entirely obviated — as to cause but little alarm, and no serious discomfort to the patient.

Begin the treatment, then, as soon as the symptoms of febrile disorder make their appearance. If the patient has no appetite, he should fast for one or two meals. If he feels languid and weak, he should lay aside all business and care, and rest till he is well. If troubled with nausea, or sickness at the stomach, he should chink two or three pints of tepid water and titillate his throat with his finger or with a feather to cause vomiting, and thus free his stomach of morbid or bilious matter. (If the warm water does not occasion vomiting, use hot water.) If his bowels are constipated, he should free them with a thorough enema of pure water. If his head aches or is congested, he should take a hot bath, and draw the blood to the

surface and extremities. The bath may be either the full-bath, sitz-bath, or the hot-air or vapor-bath. It should be taken until perspiration is induced, unless faintness occurs. This should be followed by a cool bath for three minutes, and then by wiping dry, or in place of the bath, a tepid pack may be taken for an hour. The majority of cases of fever, which, under drug treatment, prove most serious maladies, would be prevented if treated in the above manner at the outset. Fevers in general should be treated with tepid or warm water.

In the majority of cases, the patient fails to take the treatment he should until after the beginning of the secondary or confirmed stage. In this stage, there is greater weakness, an intensified headache, preternatural heat, which may be very great, and an accelerated pulse. If the treatment is now commenced, it should be by placing the patient in a warm or hot pack or bath, unless the heat of the patient be very intense, then cold water may be used. The heat of the patient will be reduced by the evaporation of the water from the surface of his body. Cold cloths should be applied to the head, unless it is congested and feels sore, in which case apply hot fomentations. The food should be very plain, yet nutritious (see Diet for the Sick).

There is a tendency in all fevers, as the doctors say, to "run a certain course and then cease," and scores of quotations from many of the best medical authors might be cited in which they inform their students that it is impossible to cure a fever, and warn them against making the attempt; for, say they, "after it has run its course, it will terminate naturally in the re-establishment of health when un-interfered with by art."— Tanner. Therefore, in treating fever, we should ever keep in view the fact that fever is not to be cured, but to be guided. In seeking to direct or control fever, we should ever bear in mind the three conditions, in either of which the patient may be found, viz.: 1. Strength and activity without grossness. 2. A weakness without much grossness. 3. Weakness with grossness. In the first form, the fever being high, without grossness, the principal requirement is to cool the patient. In the second form, there being weakness without grossness, the principal requirement is to balance the circulation. While in the third form, in which there is weakness with grossness, the principal requirement is to purify the system. In all forms of fever, free ventilation and sunlight are necessary to the patient's recovery.

*The Hygienic Family Physician: A Complete Guide for the Preservation of Health, and the Treatment of the Sick without Medicine, pg. 259-263 by M. G. Kellogg*