

PLETHORA, HYPEREMIA.

These terms signify a superabundance of blood. Some authors speak of local hyperaemia as existing whenever some, one or more organs contain too much blood, other organs at the same time containing too little. The fullness in these cases is simple congestion, and will be noticed under that head.

Symptoms.—When general plethora exists, there is an excess of blood in all parts. The face appears full or swollen, and has a purplish tinge.

The eyes appear rather small, the pulse is large, somewhat hard, and resistant. The veins are swollen, and in some cases the individual becomes quite fat; but this is not always the case, and besides this, many fleshy persons suffer from a deficiency rather than from an excess of blood.

Plethora occasions lassitude and indolence; a desire for sleep, which is often accompanied with snoring and dreaming ; a liability to vertigo and headache, and sometimes hemorrhage, especially from the nose, and from piles or hemorrhoids if they exist.

In plethora, the blood may be healthy and pure, but there is too much of it, and there is danger that some of the capillaries may be ruptured, which might result in serious consequences if the blood pass into the tissues of the brain or some other vital organ.

Cause.— The most frequent cause of plethora is too free living and too little exercise. A person with strong and large digestive organs is liable to overeat. If such a person takes more nourishment than he requires, there will be more blood made than can be used. If he takes too little exercise, or is of sedentary habits, his tissues will not change as fast as they should, hence, from these two causes, there will be an excess of blood.

Treatment.— The treatment of this disease is indicated by its cause. Active outdoor exercise is of the utmost importance. Care should be taken at first not to heat the system. Begin by taking gentle exercise of any kind, and increase gradually, always carrying it as far as possible without fatigue; for it is important that a change of tissue should take place, and this can be accelerated by exercise. A spare diet is as essential as exercise. The food must be plain, and should be taken in as small quantities as the actual demands of nutrition will allow. A **dripping-sheet** at 75° or 85°, or a **sponge-bath** at 75°, followed by a **dry-sheet**

rub, should be taken once a day for a few days, then skip a day and take the bath every alternate day thereafter for a few weeks, unless it be found that they weaken the patient.



The Hygienic Family Physician: A Complete Guide for the Preservation of Health, and the Treatment of the Sick without Medicine, pg. 224-226 by M. G. Kellogg