

CHOLERA, MALIGNANT OR EPIDEMIC

This disease has been considered the most fatal of any to which the human race is subject. Its characteristic features are vomiting, purging of watery discharges of the color and consistency of rice water, cramps, loss of animal heat, suppression of the urine, collapse and secondary fever.

There are usually three stages. In the first, there is diarrhea. In the second, there is purging of rice-water evacuations, vomiting, severe cramps, laborious breathing, coldness, with livid or bluish skin, sinking of the pulse, and collapse. In the collapsed stage, the surface is cold, the skin blue, the tongue lead color and cold, the lips are purple, the eyes sunken in their sockets, the cheeks fallen, the body diminishes, and there is a death-like appearance of the entire body; the voice is husky and faint, and the skin is bathed in a cold sweat. In the third stage, there is a reaction; a fever sets in, which continues until all danger is past.

Cause.— The immediate cause of epidemic cholera is unknown, but is supposed to be atmospheric. There are, however, certain well-known predisposing causes which all may avoid. When these causes are present, sporadic cholera— cholera

morbus— may exist, and if the atmospheric cause is also present, epidemic cholera may prevail; without these predisposing causes, neither form can prevail, therefore, cholera of every description may be avoided by avoiding the predisposing causes. These are, malarious gases that arise from decomposing vegetable and animal matters, want of ventilation, impure water (this last is very bad), fear, and uncleanly habits of person and house.

Treatment Preventive.—Remove all decomposing animal or vegetable matter, including offal (*the entrails and internal organs of an animal used as food*), manure heaps, stagnant water, foul pig-pens, henneries, and privy vaults (*All earth-pit privies, out-closets or privy vaults on property that is not capable of being serviced by a Park water and sewer system*). In other words, make your premises as clean as possible, keep the living and sleeping rooms thoroughly ventilated night and day, and let in the sunlight. Use no impure water— be sure on this point.— use filtered rain water or soft water, and eat plain, nourishing food, composed of vegetable substances. Take a tepid bath twice a week; keep the bowels regular by the use of wheat-meal bread, mush, or with enemas if necessary.

Treatment Curative.—As soon as the diarrhea makes its appearance, administer a copious tepid enema, give a warm bath for twenty minutes, and put the patient to bed and enjoin strict repose; then apply a cold compress to the abdomen, and change as often as it becomes hot. Let the patient drink freely of cool or tepid water, or sparingly of cold water. If the diarrhea continues four or five hours after the bath, give a small cold enema, to be retained. Give a woolen sheet pack, as hot as the patient can bear, for fifteen or twenty minutes, then take him out and wipe dry, then apply the cold compress to the abdomen as before. After vomiting occurs, give ice water in small quantities to drink. Bits of ice may be swallowed also. If cramping occurs, apply heat to the extremities and abdomen, and rub all parts thoroughly. Should collapse occur, give an enema of hot water of three, four, or more pints as hot as the patient can bear, and envelop him in a very hot wet woolen blanket, covered with dry blankets, as directed for packs. As the patient recovers, be careful not to overfeed him, nor allow him to take too much exercise. This disease is often fatal.

The Hygienic Family Physician: A Complete Guide for the Preservation of Health, and the Treatment of the Sick without Medicine, pg. 337-40 by M. G. Kellogg