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THE CARE
of
THE MOTHER



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
CHILDREN'S BUREAU
WASHINGTON

THE CARE OF THE MOTHER

THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS WRAPPED UP IN THAT OF THE MOTHER

The life, health, and normal development of the child depend largely on the health and protection of the mother.

The chances of an infant's living depend on:

1. Sufficient income for family needs.
2. Health and right living of parents.
3. Protection of the expectant mother from overwork, underfeeding, and worry.
4. Skilled supervision of pregnancy and confinement.
5. Rest and adequate care during the lying-in period.
6. Maintenance of breast feeding.
7. Intelligent mother care in the home.

** A mother can injure the child she carries just as much during the nine months before birth, as during the nine months after birth.*

INFANT MORTALITY

More than half of the babies who die during the first year of life die from causes related to the condition of the mother. In 1916, in the returns from 70 per cent of the population of the United States there were over 75,000 deaths of children under 1 month of age (45.9 per cent of total infant deaths). Most of these are the babies who are born too weak, too injured, or too diseased to live. Some of these little ones died because their mothers did not know how to safeguard their breast milk or appreciate the importance of breast feeding.

These babies were an unnecessary sacrifice to ignorance and bad living conditions.

The protection of maternity can no longer be evaded. This wastage of life at birth must stop, for not only is every infant a

potential citizen, but the same conditions which account for half our infant deaths are *impairing the health and vitality of those babies who survive*. It is not those who die *but those who live* that should now be considered.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

Few of us realize that child-bearing is at present a most dangerous occupation so far as life is concerned. In 1916, we lost in the United States at least 16,000 women from all causes connected with child-bearing, and practically all these deaths were preventable. Child-bed fever is the most frequent cause of death among child-bearing women, and is a form of wound infection, largely due to the introducing of infection on the hands of the attendant at the time of childbirth.

One mother dies in every 150 cases of childbirth; one child in every 20 liveborn does not live six weeks. The death rate in the trenches is about one in 50 of the men actively engaged.

Why waste life needlessly?

BEFORE THE BABY COMES

See that the mother has:

1. Early consultation with a well-trained physician, complete physical examination, including pelvic measurements, and frequent examination of the urine.
 2. Nourishing diet, with plenty of milk.
 3. Regulation of excessive gain in weight by frequent weighing and by curtailing starch and sugar in the diet.
 4. Abundance of liquids, especially water.
 5. Regulation of constipation, by food if possible.
 6. Daily bath to increase elimination by the skin.
 7. Attention to teeth and necessary dentistry.
 8. Sufficient rest and sleep.
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9. Work and exercise moderated to prevent fatigue.
10. Proper clothing and the possibility of recreation.
11. Outdoor airing daily, or at least free ventilation of the bedroom.

TRAINED ATTENDANCE DURING CONFINEMENT

The skilled assistance necessary to make confinement safe demands a special training, and is indeed a special branch of surgery. The best surgeon is none too good if one is suffering from appendicitis or a broken leg. A trained veterinarian is always called in for valuable farm stock. *Do not the life and future health of a wife and child warrant the best medical and nursing skill available?*

AFTER THE BABY COMES

A woman should rest in bed at least one week, and should not resume full household duties for at least one month after confinement.

She needs this period of rest:

1. To heal and recuperate.
2. To prevent hemorrhage.
3. To produce milk for her baby.

The energy of the mother's food must not be used up in hard manual labor instead of going into breast milk for the baby. Hard work inside or outside the house will take the flesh off the baby.

Pregnancy is not a disease—it is only health under a strain. Learn how to ease the strain.

When every expectant mother is properly cared for at home, and when every expectant mother has skilled supervision and attention during pregnancy, confinement, and the lying-in period

MATERNITY WILL BE SAFE FOR WOMEN