



Dr. Holt's Prescription for the Treatment of Yellow Fever. (Transcript)



(1) One who has not had yellow fever, and is apprehensive that he may have been exposed to its cause by a residence after midsummer, in a city where yellow fever is often epidemic, if attacked a few weeks after such exposure, would reasonably suppose it to be an attack of yellow fever. If attacked with a chill, attended with violent headache soon followed by severe pain of the back, and in some cases of the limbs, also-prudence would dictate an immediate recourse to an appropriate method of treating yellow fever.

(2) Let the patient at once take his bed and be covered with blankets, As soon as it can be done, have the orange leaves drawn in two or three pints of boiling water, and give a cup of the orange leaf tea, sweetened to suit the taste, every fifteen or twenty minutes; at the same time have the feet immersed in a hot foot bath from fifteen to thirty minutes, or until the patient's in a free perspiration.

(3) This free perspiration immediately succeeding the chill, attended with febril heat and much pain, I regard as a distinguishing symptom of yellow fever.

(4) Mustard, though not essential, is a good addition to the foot bath.

(5) When the chill is entirely off, the foot bath having been used and the tea given, let the patient rest quietly for half an hour. If then his hands and feet are about as hot as his body, give him the powder mixed with water, in a tablespoon, and let him drink some water after it if he choose.

(6) If the hands and feet remain comparatively cool, and the pulse small, you must delay giving the powder a while longer, until the reaction is more complete. Having given the powder, let the patient remain undisturbed for eight hours, giving only a little weak orange leaf tea or a little water at his request, which should be of the atmospheric temperature if the weather is warm, and a little above it if cool.

(7) Six hours after giving the powder, let the senna and the manna be put to draw in a pint of boiling water, and in two hours –that is eight hours after giving the powder – give a fourth part of the senna tea, and repeat the dose every half hour until it be all taken or until it excites copious purging.

(8) The covering of the patient should be so regulated, as to make him comfortable; and when he may have occasion to rise to the vessel, should be gently aided; and as soon as he is up, a cloak or blanket should be thrown over his shoulders. To much care cannot be taken to avoid a check of perspiration; and that the feet may not be exposed to a sudden change or rising, it will be prudent to spread a woolen rug or blanket by the bed side, on which to set the vessel.

(9) About the time that the senna tea is made, let a third part of the pearl barley be thoroughly washed in cold water, and put to boil in about six pints of water, and when it has boiled down to four pints, have it pored into an earthen vessel, and kept in the patient's room to be used as his constant drink from the time his medicine begins to

operate. Some of the barley water may be sweetened with loaf sugar if the patient desire it, and he may be indulged in a little water, as directed above.

(10) Twenty-four hours after giving the senna tea, give a full dose of castor oil. A good method of giving the oil, is to drop on a lump of sugar, of the mix of a nutmeg, eight or ten drops of the essence of peppermint, dissolve it in a tablespoon of hot water, add four table spoonfuls of oil, stir it together and give it.

(11) When the oil operates, aid and the patient directed above. Have fresh barley water made, and let him by no means take into his stomach anything stronger or more nutritious than barley water.

(12) By the end of the next twenty-four hours, the fever will have subsided. Half a sialit powder may then be given in a little less than half a tumbler of water, of the atmospheric temperature, well sweetened; and in half an hour give the other half, adding the acid in its dry state, and stirring it round once just as the patient is ready to drink it. The remaining barley may be now made into a light barley broth, but adding a squab or part of a chicken; and after it is prepared, season with salt to the taste of the convalescent.

(13) As the convalescence advances, a cautious return must be made to a more generous diet. Tea and toast, or crackers, light soups, fresh oysters stewed with very little seasoning, soft boiled eggs, or such other articles of light nutritious diet as can be readily procured, such as rice, arrow root, may be cautiously indulged in.

(14) When nine days from the commencement of the disease have elapsed, the convalescent may speedily return to his usual mode of living.

(15) In the treatment of children, the course above prescribed is to be pursued in every respect, proportioning the doses of medicine to the age of the patient; thus at two years of age, give one-fourth part of the quantity prescribed; at seven years of age, one-third; at ten, one-half; at thirteen, two-thirds; at sixteen years of age, give the full amount prescribed.

(16) My experience justifies me in the belief, that the practice above recommended, if strictly pursued, will be in all cases successful, and that by it the yellow fever will be disarmed of its terrors. Let me caution you against doing more or less than I have directed – and do not vary to the right hand or to the left.

D. Holt, M.D.
New Orleans, October 1, 1843