

PARAGRAPHS FROM A HOSPITAL PHARMACY NOTEBOOK.*

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Eserine salicylate may be preserved in the form of its aqueous solution for instillation into the eye, by dissolving it in a saturated solution of boric acid.

Most eserine salts are very readily decomposed by alkaline substances, with the production of a red to a brown color. This tendency to discoloration may also be retarded by dissolving the salt in carbonated water.

Carbonated water lends itself well to the preservation of many organic compounds, and substances such as suprarenal extract are not prone to spoil when diluted with "soda water" instead of with distilled water.

Suprarenal extract or adrenalin solutions are readily amenable to qualitative chemical tests, but one of the most delicate tests for the natural as well as the synthetic compound is to instill a fraction of a drop of the 1:1000 solution into a freshly made scratch on the forearm. If there is an appreciable quantity of the active principle present, the scarified area will become blanched and in some instances show a raised urticarial wheal, resembling an insect bite.

In the manufacturing of suppositories using heat and brass molds, the best lubricating agent is the official tincture of green soap. Using this fluid it is unnecessary to relubricate the molds oftener than once for every five or six batches.

Tincture of green soap for operating room use is very conveniently made by taking 25 pounds of soft soap, cotton seed stock, or preferably cottonseed stock with ten per cent. cocoanut oil soap, and adding to it ten gallons of hot water and five gallons of medicated alcohol. Upon allowing this mixture to stand, covered, in a warm room for a few days, the result is a homogeneous solution, self clarified by sedimentation. It may be tinted a beautiful green by adding to it about 2 ounces of a 1:1000 aqueous solution of toluidine blue.

Compound cresol solution may be easily made by adding ten pounds of clear cresol to the same amount of soft soap and then allowing the mixture to stand in a covered vessel for several days. The soap will go into complete solution and the end product is perfectly miscible with water. Solution of cresol so made needs no filtering, for it becomes perfectly clear by sedimentation.

A very palatable potassium citrate solution for the pediatric clinic, may be made by rubbing the citrate with an equal amount of coarse sugar and a piece of fresh lemon rind. Then there is added to this mixture carbonated water from a siphon, and the finished solution strained through gauze or cotton.

An empty serum or antitoxin syringe, without the needle, is an excellent aid in dispensing orders calling for dram portions of mercurial ointment for inunction. The syringe barrel is filled at the upper orifice, the plunger inserted and the oint-

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ment pressed out on to the waxed paper on the scale. This convenient method may also be used in filling soft capsules, retaining a coarse needle where the nature of the filling liquid admits of such handling.

An order for ink to be used in the X-ray department of the hospital for the purpose of marking the films previous to exposure and development was recently submitted to the pharmacy. Three inks were experimented with. They were as follows:

1. Twenty-five per cent. suspension of bismuth metal, in fine powder, in a thin mucilage.
2. Strong solution of lead subacetate.
3. Twenty-five per cent. solution of collargel, a colloidal silver preparation, with the addition of a little oxide of zinc.

The last named proved most satisfactory although not quite as efficient as the usual lead markers.

Persons who have an antipathy to the suspensions of barium sulphate used in the X-ray department for shadow pictures may find a suspension of the chemical in malted milk, slightly warmed, more palatable. A thickened chocolate vehicle is also preferable to the simple paste generally used. Barium sulphate is not readily decomposed and these adjunctive administrative methods do not add any element of danger to its use.

Castor oil jelly may be made much more agreeable to the palate by making it with about 8 per cent. of spermaceti instead of with the usual stearin soap base. The spermaceti is fused and the warmed oil and flavoring material then added. A little saccharin and color is generally added in alcohol.

Hypodermic syringes are generally sterilized by simple rinsing with alcohol. Often an appreciable residuum of alcohol remains in the barrel. The medicament afterwards added is sometimes affected by this residuum. This is said to be the frequent cause of untoward results following the injection of such viable substances as the pollen or food proteins which are precipitated by the alcohol. Before the administration of such sensitive solutions, the alcohol sterilized syringe should always be rinsed out with sterile distilled water.

Anent barium sulphate, a note of warning regarding the danger of prolonged improper storage may not be amiss. A large Philadelphia hospital recently encountered a great deal of trouble with patients who had been given the usual doses of the chemical in their X-ray clinic. Examination of the sulphate led to the discovery in it of more than traces of soluble sulphides, which were probably responsible for the toxic effects of the material. Whether these were originally present or there as products of reduction is not known. The salt had been stored in a damp cellar for a long period of time and it is quite likely that decomposition may have occurred. This compound then should not be purchased in amount greatly in excess of monthly or quarterly needs.
