

Florence Nightingale

12th May 1820 – 13th August 1910

In this her bicentennial year, it is appropriate that we should reflect on the life of the woman for whom our Trust is named and who led the way to modern nursing.



In her 'Notes on Nursing' (1859), Florence placed much importance on the value of good nutrition in the recovery of the sick. So much so that she devoted two chapters to the subject, one of which is the longest in the book. Once more she was concerned with the individual; in this case, in the art of preparing, presenting and giving nourishment to him. **Whilst Florence was referring to eating and drinking, we now also have the additional access to artificial nutritional support for those who cannot eat. All these stages of nutrition still form a vital component of the art and science of nursing.** Undoubtedly Florence still holds a position of pre-eminence in British nursing and The Nightingale Trust for Nutritional Support are proud to be named after her.

“If Florence Nightingale were alive today, how would she be responding to Covid 19?”

One can assume that in this current crisis her immense drive and commitment would place her in a central role. In line with her nursing management during the Crimean War, where she galvanised a nursing work force, then directed nursing care on the front line. It is likely in the current crisis that she would be driving the nurse's response.

Her Campaign for meeting essential supply needs at Scutari mimic our current medical shortages of PPE. As a pioneer in the visual presentation of information and statistics, she would be debating with today's expert modellers for transmission of disease, and probably developing her own comprehensive statistical study.

The prefabricated hospital designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, built in England then shipped to the Dardanelles, was built after Nightingale sent a plea to The Times for a government solution to the poor condition of the facilities at Scutari. A link may be drawn between this commissioned built medical facility at Scutari, and for example the hospitals currently being built in London, Birmingham & Manchester. It is no coincidence that these are being called NHS Nightingale hospitals!



She recognised the psychological needs of the soldiers and its importance in their recovery, so would be advocating the importance of mental health support to Covid 19 patients.

Finally, there is no doubt that she would be at the forefront of ensuring that the importance of good nutrition was not forgotten, and that all patients receive nutritional support appropriate to their needs. One assumes that many, especially those needing ventilation will require enteral feeding.

The Nightingale Trust would like to say to all the nurses and other healthcare professionals caring for those with Covid 19, thank you and stay safe.



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