

Old Fashioned Cold Remedies

Similar to today, colds were common occurrences in most places. Many of the classic fixes for a cold are still in practice. A eucalyptus plant was a common ingredient in many remedies for symptoms like congestion, coughs and sore throats. Usually steamed and breathed in, the oil from eucalyptus plants would actually sooth any sore spots in the airway while the steam would cause the mucus to dislodge. Chicken soup worked in a similar way. The steam helped with the mucus while the broth helped to rehydrate the body.



Eucalyptus leaves hold many medicinal properties

Garlic was commonly used to shorten the life of a cold substantially. The cloves in garlic contain many supplements that are both antiviral and antibacterial helping to fight off phlegm.

Cinnamon, which was once as valuable as gold, has been used to heal illness for thousands of years. The bark from the tree that holds the cinnamon contains an oily chemical that kills many bacteria that cause illness. It also reduces fevers and is an anti-inflammatory.



Cinnamon comes from the evergreen trees named *Cinnamomum*

Traditional Medicine: Seeing a Doctor

Doctors in rural areas such as Sackville typically did not have their practice located in a building. Most often, the physician would have either operated out of their homes or travelled by horse and buggy to the patient. Doctor Angus Morton (1871-1944) was a well-known doctor in the Bedford-Sackville area in the early 1900s. After graduating from Dalhousie Medical School in 1898, Doctor Morton made many house calls to the residents of Sackville to tend to the ill and assist with the birth of children.

Early on, many doctors had individual remedies that they tended to commonly use. Until the late 1800s, most used the act of bloodletting to remove toxins from the body by cutting into the arm causing bleeding. The medicine given after 1900 time would have been applied topically in an ointment or taken orally by dissolving in a drink like tea. The doctor was the person who typically made the medication because there would not have been pharmacies in small towns at this point in time. Pills were rarely seen because they were time consuming and difficult to make. Treatments would have focused on the symptoms instead of the actual illness.



Dr. Angus Morton and family circa 1918

The Cure for What Ails You...

HOMEMADE & NATURAL REMEDIES



Pictured above is the Sackville Heritage Park wetlands. The Fultz House can be seen in the background.

**FULTZ HOUSE
MUSEUM**

An Introduction on Healing the Ailing

Healing different sicknesses in rural communities was often difficult because of the lack of medical professionals in the area. Most injuries or illnesses were looked after in the home. The remedies that were used were made of either affordable items or those that could be found in the surrounding area such as from plants, animals, and food grown in the garden. The mother usually acted as the family doctor and took care of the children and husband's ailments. These special homemade cures were passed down and altered through each generation. Some illnesses were even combated with small portions of items that would usually harm a person. Fancy pills and medication were not regularly seen at this time so new remedies had to be tested multiple times before deemed safe.

Home Cures for Diarrhea, Headaches and Wounds

A few of the most common illnesses that people in rural areas may have been infected with were diarrhea, headaches and small wounds. Diarrhea was a common occurrence because of the occasional shortage of certain foods or the consumption of undercooked food causing food poisoning. A common remedy for this was to eat things like yogurt and blackberries. Blackberries were the best friend of someone dealing with diarrhea. Many adults made blackberry tea or even blackberry juice mixed with brandy to help relieve their illness. The strangest of the remedies for diarrhea was to squat over burning twigs and leaves with your pants off and let the smoke sooth the issue.



Wild blackberries grow on bushes similar to raspberries

Headaches were another common occurrence and involved mostly plants to cure. Most headaches were caused by head trauma, poor diet or stress, similar to today. The remedies for head pain included plants such as ginger and feverfew that would reduce migraines. Ginger root could be crushed and made into a tea and the effects were similar to aspirin. Peppermint oil applied to the hairline would create a cooling sensation that relaxed the muscles in the head and neck. Small wounds were typically treated all the same. Most of the wounds were wrapped in a bandage after applying an ointment made out of animal fat.

Remedies from Swamps and Bogs



The Pitcher Plant is usually found in bogs

Swamps and bogs are areas that most people steer clear of. The smell and mud tend to deter most people. However, some of the very unique plants that grow in these spots often have healing properties that many people are not aware of. Alder leaves were common items used by many. Steeping the bark from the alder tree was used to treat stomach cramps, kidney ailments and fevers.

Blue Flag is a plant that can often be found in shallow water and wet areas. This plant of bitter taste is an emetic that has been used to rid the stomach of poisonous substances by inducing vomiting. Other plants such as the Pitcher Plant (see picture above) consisted of a cup-shaped leaf. The water that was collected in the "cups" absorbed many of the plant's medicinal properties, which was why it was often used to treat tuberculosis in the early 20th century.

Folk Remedies

Many remedies practiced in these old-time rural communities were an attempt to treat an illness but most were a shot in the dark or actually harmful to a human. Some of the less common ones have been either discontinued or are unique to certain areas or a culture. The fat from birds such as owls, was often used as the basis of ointments and was used



The Barred Owl is Nova Scotia's most common owl

to treat aches and pains. Other ailments like earaches were treated with tobacco smoke. It was thought that smoke blown into the ear of a patient would soothe the pain.

Poultices or dressings were constantly used for injuries. It was very common to grind the mustard plant into a powder and spread inside the poultice to stimulate healing of the wound. External body pains could often be treated by soaking the body part in a warm mustard bath. This would provide temporary relief and would need to be done repeatedly until the pain subsided. Another common remedy practiced by many in the past was the use of sugar to treat problems of the eye. By placing sugar in the eyes and washing it out with water repeatedly, people reported improved vision with ailments such as cataracts.



Mustard plants are usually seen in large fields that are close to water