



12-15-1982

When There Is No Doctor...

Donita Lucas Shields

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>

Recommended Citation

Shields, Donita Lucas (1982) "When There Is No Doctor...", *Westview*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 2 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol2/iss2/10>

This Nonfiction is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.



My pioneering grandparents were among the earliest to settle in the isolated Cheyenne-Arapaho Lands after the Run in 1892. Prairie life filled with harshness and inconvenience dealt them a mighty challenge, but they improvised and made do with what they brought with them in one covered wagon. They were resourceful, happy, and healthy.

During those early formative years of Oklahoma Territory, no doctor ventured into those sparsely settled areas. Had he arrived with the first settlers, he would have treated few patients, for a doctor cost money. Money my grandparents and other early settlers did not have.

My grandparents brought with them to the newly opened Territory an instinct for survival and a few old remedies and cures handed down to them from their own parents and friends. Many of these old remedies seem crude and simple compared with our modern standards. Yet I cannot laugh lightly at them as they must have been successful.

At least they must not have been harmful since all my relatives led long, active lives well into their eighties and nineties. Here are a number of their tried and proven remedies handed down to me by my practical and ingenious pioneering ancestors.

Cure for Ague: Slice 3 lemons into thin pieces and pound them fine. Make a quart of coffee and boil it down to a pint. While still hot, pour coffee over lemons. When mixture is cold, strain it through a cloth. Drink the whole in one dose before the chill passes off and there is a renewal of fever.

22 Cure for Bee Stings: (1) Put a pinch of salt on the place. Dissolve salt with water and rub. (2) Fresh wood ashes moistened with water and made into a poultice is helpful. Change the poultice frequently. (3) Slice an onion and rub on bite. Hold onion in place until pain is removed. Change onion slices as they become dry.

Cure for Burns: (1) Common wheat flour sprinkled thickly on the burn will prevent blistering or scarring. Baking soda is similarly helpful. (2) Soak the burned area in cold water until pain is relieved.

Cure for Mild Headache: (1) Apply water as hot as the skin will bear to the forehead. (2) Drink hot water and soak feet in a warm footbath with ashes or soda added to the water. (3) Soak feet in hot water. Drink herb tea and break out into a sweat.

Cure for Hoarseness: (1) Boil 2 ounces of flaxseed in 1 quart of water. Strain and add 2 ounces rock candy, 1/2 pint of syrup or honey, and juice of 3 lemons. Mix and boil again. Cool and bottle. Drink 1 hot cupful before going to bed. (2) Beat the white of 1 egg and add juice from 1 lemon. Sweeten with white sugar. Take 1 teaspoonful from time to time.

Cure for Nosebleed: Keep the head raised. Determine which nostril is bleeding and hold the arm on that side perpendicularly. Hold the sides of the nose between the eyes with finger and thumb. Apply cloth dipped in cold or ice water to forehead or on the back of neck.

For Relief of Nausea: Beat 1 egg for twenty minutes. Add 1 pint of fresh milk, 1 pint of water, and enough sugar to make drink palatable. Boil and cool before drinking.

Treatment for Mumps: Keep face and neck warm. Apply warm cloths on swelling. Avoid taking cold. Drink warm herb teas. If there is fever, give the patient a tepid sponge bath. If a severe cold is taken and other glands are affected, a physic must be given and cooling poultices applied to swelling. Sweating must also be resorted to in this case. Should the brain become affected, give a very hot footbath for ten minutes. Then apply cool cloths to the head. Seek to induce sweating by applying hot water to back and feet. Drink hot water.

To Treat Poison Ivy or Sumac: Apply water as hot as the skin will bear. Dip cloth in water and apply to irritated skin. Sometimes vaseline or weak solution of ammonia will relieve itching. Bathing the affected parts with sweet spirits of nitre 3 or 4 times daily can bring relief. Applying a poultice of raw oat-meal and warm water is also soothing.

Remedy for Rheumatism: Cut Castile soap unto small bits. Add 1 heaping tablespoon of red cayenne pepper. Pour into 1/2 pint of boiling water. Stir until dissolved and add a little cider brandy or alcohol when bottling. Apply to aching joints and then rub on a little sweet oil to relax muscles.

Treatment of Sunstroke: If the patient is able to swallow, give cool drinks of water or cold black tea or coffee. If the skin is hot and dry, sponge or pour cold water over body and limbs. Ice packs may be applied to head. If ice is not available, use cold water. If the patient is faint and the pulse feeble, inhaling ammonia or drinking a teaspoon of aromatic spirits of ammonia in 2 tablespoons of water with a little sugar will be a restorative.

To Prevent Tan and Sunburn: Rub the juice of a fresh lemon over the face. Let dry before going out in open air. At night dust a little oatmeal over the face. Next morning wash it off and rub on cold cream or butter-milk.

Remedies for Toothache: (1) Baking soda held in mouth often gives relief to aching cavity. (2) Apply a bit of cotton saturated in ammonia and hold in cavity. (3) Insert into cavity a bit of cotton dampened with oil of cloves. If this fails to relieve, mix equal portions of oil of cinnamon, oil of peppermint, or creosote. Press cotton dry before application so solution will not be swallowed.

To Remove Warts: If warts are on hands, make a strong solution of borax and hot water. Soak hand for twenty minutes. Dry and rub warts briskly. Repeat 4 or 5 times. Warts will disappear without leaving scars.

For the more serious childhood diseases, early pioneers resorted to the following treatments:

Treatment of Croup: Apply cold wet packs to the throat and cover with dry cloths. Change packs frequently. If it is possible to bathe patient in a warm room, use water as hot as possible. Rub chest and abdomen brisk-

ly. Keep water hot and immerse entire including neck. When patient is removed the bath, wrap in a hot dry sheet and rub dry. If fever is high, wrap abdomen in a bandage. Cover with a dry flannel. Apply cold wet cloths to neck. Keep the warm. If breathing is not easier, cover the and upper chest with cold compresses twenty minutes. Rub back and chest. Massage arms and legs. Give alternate drinks of and cold water. Membranous croup is dangerous as it may last for days.

Treatment of Measles: Keep patient in well-ventilated room free from draughts. Provide a bland diet and tepid drinks. Sponge body with warm water. If there is not apply unsalted lard to the area. Should there be a recession of rash with an attack of delirium, plunge patient into a hot mustard bath until the skin becomes red. Then wrap the body in a warm blanket. For laryngitis apply warm cloths over the throat and have patient to inhale steam.

To Treat Whooping Cough: Keep patient in a cool, well-ventilated room, but do allow open windows within the room. Serve light foods and liquids, especially milk. Do not serve meats as they tend to heat the body. Give equal portions of oil of pale and spirit of hartshorn for cough. Apply this liquid at night and morning along soles of the feet and along the spine, especially the upper part.

Dr. Lucas Shields

e enti
remov
and im
men i
annek
ain
Keep
cove
mpre
est. I
drin
upis
ed
n a
traug
s. Sp
the
ng.
Shou
an at
of
hou
ard
d. The
rap
for la
itis
ow
Keep
ent
not
a, but
rve
e room
y milks
not
the bo
fix
nd sg
s figu
zht
eet an
ng
art.

