

Introduction



Long before Rite-Aid, CVS, or even Kinney Drugs, there was the local pharmacy in Davidson, Michigan. It might not have been much to write home about by today's standards; but back then, it seemed as grand as Walgreens does today. Just about every Saturday morning, Grandma Putt would lead me to the back of the store, through the maze of dark bottles, potent-smelling herbs, and mysterious wooden boxes, until we eventually found Mr. Ernest Hugg, the apothecary himself. I can still picture old Ernie standing behind his big oak counter—which was filled with an array of multicolored ointments and potions—busily grinding something into a powder or poultice to ease somebody's aches and pains.

A lot of folks thought Mr. Hugg was a bunch of bunk, but not Grandma Putt. When we visited, she and old Ernie would talk shop for hours, laughing, joking, trading secrets, and sharing wisdom. It was as if they had an unspoken understanding: She never bought anything, and he never asked her to. And it wasn't



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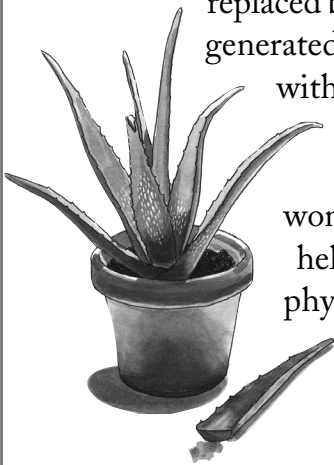
because she didn't believe his tonics worked; she absolutely did! It's just that she was a bit of an apothecary herself.



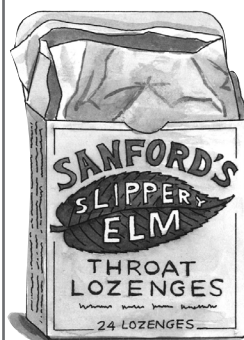
When I was growing up, it seemed that Grandma Putt had an oddball ointment, powerful potion, or remarkable remedy for just about anything that ailed our family—whether it was garlic and oil for one of my awful earaches, a hot cup of special coffee to stop Uncle Art's asthma attacks, or a sage-and-vinegar poultice to ease Grandma Putt's all-too-often bee stings. Some of these concoctions were passed down from her Native American ancestors. Others, she picked up from friends, neighbors, or acquaintances—like Ernest Hugg—who knew a thing or two about fixers and elixirs that kept the doctor away.



And did they ever! To say that I was as healthy as a horse is like saying that I have a bit of a green thumb. I tell you, I didn't see hide nor hair of a doctor until I was out of college, and that was just for a routine physical. It was only after I got older and moved away that I found myself visiting a traditional doctor more often. It seemed that over time, the lotions, motions, and potions that were developed in Grandma Putt's kitchen were replaced by a variety of chemicals and prescription drugs generated in a laboratory. And after many years of use with only so-so results, I realized that something had to give.



Then I met Beth Wotton, N.D. Beth is a wonderful woman who has devoted her life to helping and caring for others. She's a naturopathic physician from Sausalito, California, and she just loves to ferret out remedies that really work for her patients. Rather than reaching for the

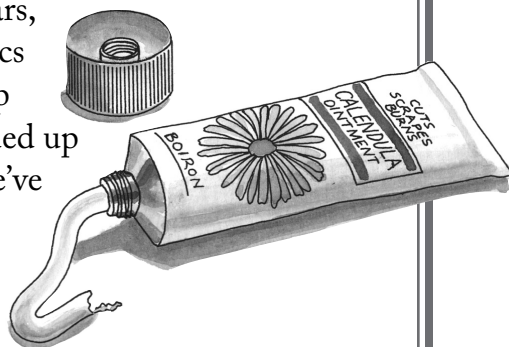


latest wonder drug the minute somebody sneezes, Beth combines plants, herbs, and other things with a dollop of common sense—just like Grandma Putt used to do! Imagine my surprise when I discovered that she still prescribes some of the very same things that Grandma used to use on her own family way back when.

Talking to Beth was a revelation, taking me back to much simpler time when folks relied on good old-fashioned, time-tested remedies, instead of running to the doctor at the slightest sign of a sniffle.

And since I'm always on the lookout for the latest and greatest health information to share with my friends, I realized that here was an opportunity to share some of these gems—the old-time ointments, potions, and remedies—with the world. So I called my friend Jean, a New York writer who has been pawing through medical data for some 20 years now and who has written some 30-odd books about health. After discussing this project with her, I knew we were on to something—combining Beth's wide-ranging knowledge with Jean's terrific talent would result in a hard-hitting treasure trove of natural home remedies, backed by solid medical evidence. And guess what? It did!

We've worked hard over the last 2 years, gathering together the best old-time tonics and new medical marvels to help you help yourself. You want potions? We've rounded up plenty of 'em! How about ointments? We've got oodles of them, too! And what about those fabulous folk remedies that work like magic? Well, we've also uncovered a bunch of those! It's all here, in a book that's jam-packed with hundreds of tips, tricks, and tonics to





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keep you and your family in the pink of health. For example, you'll discover how to:

- ✓ Combat coughs with a triple-threat throat spray.
- ✓ Heal heartburn with licorice.
- ✓ Cure insomnia, thanks to a cup of “stinky tea”!
- ✓ Treat mild burns with the pizza herb.
- ✓ Keep bad breath at bay with a dilly of a fix.
- ✓ Ward off nausea with an orange.
- ✓ Use vinegar to relieve aches and pains.
- ✓ Erase age spots with horseradish and yogurt.



Amazing, isn't it? And, all of the remedies in this book are backed by medical science, except for our “Fabulous Folk Remedies,” which are, well, folk remedies. That doesn't mean that they don't work. It just means that nobody's tested them in a lab.

The result of our efforts is one giant, easy-to-use volume that brings you the best ways to prevent, ward off, or even cure over 100 of the most common ailments and illnesses you'll ever face. While this book and our advice will never (and should never!) replace your doctor's expertise, they can help you maintain a lifetime of good health. So read on, my friends, and see if the odd-ball ointments, powerful potions, and fabulous folk remedies don't put the spring back in your step and the sparkle back in your eye—just like they did for Grandma Putt and me!

Jerry Baker