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# TRADITIONS OF GUATEMALA



EL CAFE LITERARIO

Selected publications

3arexencia 720,69 call 3-39

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Guatemala (1), Central America

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Guatemala, April 1971.

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1968

# POPULAR MEDICINE OF MIXCO

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This small research was the result of a survey conducted among the Mixco population. All the people consulted in the various social strata said they had practiced some of the medicines described here, usually with good results, according to them. Its use is explained in this locality, only 16 km from the capital, not for lack of doctors, but for the great confidence that people have in these medicines, used before by their parents and grandparents.

Two of the persons interviewed (1) are specialized in the repair of broken bones or dislocations, first smearing the affected part with sebum.

To calm a toothache is usually used to put incense, camphor, and a clove in the sting.

Baths of hot linden or horsetail water are also used, and then the decay of the teeth is soaked in moonshine, and water from orange, lettuce, cadosanto, or Chiapas pepper leaves.

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(1) Estanislao Mendoza (77 years old) and Fermina Sunay (25 years old to practice the profession of

Smallpox is supposed to be cured by smearing butter and annatto all over the patient's body, then he needs to drink bitter orange juice with honey or a kind of atoll made with donkey manure and chicha.

Cramps are relieved by rubbing the painful part with a lemon, shriveled, whole, or broken.

One of the most advised remedies against measles is made up of tarta, smilax, cassia, barley, corn hair, and lime blossom. The infusion is widely used and is attributed to the great curative value of measles. It consists of raw sugar, tamarind, cassia, cream of tarta, prune, borage, and sage. The plum and hibiscus water are also good, because they are considered fresh. To prevent a "cloud in the eye" from children because of measles, parents must chew garlic and blow on the children's eyes several times. The same healing effect is attributed to rubbing with butter and annatto around the eyes, surrounding the children's bed with a red cloth, or hanging a red curtain from the windows of the room or door. This is done in the belief that light hurts sight and red color attenuates it.

Boiled water baths with quinoa skin are used to dry the pimples left over from measles, and the temperature resulting from the same disease is counteracted by placing slices of coffee or red onion leaf insoles on the child.

The headache is alleviated by applying *tamalitos* made of purple corn husk with soap and sebum to the forehead. Also placed on the temples several black beans split in half, thin slices of potatoes with shells, small slices of lemon shelled with ground coffee, canvas of French bread with moonshine or apply sheets of ink or verbena, also used sebum insoles with mustard powder and pepper are also used, and if the pain affects the back of the head, juice from a grease lemon is squeezed on the affected area. This can be accompanied by an infusion of leaves from the chicken.

Cough is cured with an infusion of cherry leaves, fig and a little cinnamon or with an infusion of seeds of snapper; of leaves of fig and cinnamon; of herbs and cinnamon, of flowers of bugambilia; of malva, of horsetail; of flowers of violet, a sprout of borage and cinnamon cypress; or cocoa beans, dried plum, violet, horsetail, and gum Arabic. The tamarind water, and also swallow whole seven cloves of purple garlic, it is said, that gives a good effect against cough.

The malaria gives way by drinking tamarind water with cinnamon and Gumbo limbo, or also with an infusion made of the root of alcoton, and then rubbing with moonshine throughout the body.

To cure pneumonia, one of the most popular and recommended drugs is a hot drink made by boiling cockroaches in water with honey; if the cockroaches are an inch long, better. Also to counteract this same disease, an infusion of alcotán root and also made a friction with moonshine on the lungs.

The cockroach drink is made by adding cinnamon and lemon, also used to lower swelling.

Stains on the face disappear by drinking lemon juice or rubbing a lemon over the affected part of the face.

When a patient is in bed for a long time, without changing position frequently, they usually have sores on their body. The sores disappear by putting tender leaves of *Guineo* on the sheets, or leaves of cancer on the sores, or drinking water of *apazote*. There is also a widespread belief that sores are cured by placing a basin of water under the bed. Another very effective remedy is gluing to the sores of the leaves. You also put on leaves of *chalchupa* or *coralillo* and soba with them, always in the direction towards the shoulder (in this case, the real wound was in one arm) so that the disease does not flow to the ends, since the blood "goes to the center"

When someone has been spiked with *chichicaste* leaves to relieve it are rubbing

wet mud or human urine on the affected part.

The most popular medicines to contain seats are banana atol, tangerine juice, peppermint water with cinnamon and a few drops of lemon, boiled rice water or toasted cooked rice or dried laurel leaf water. It is believed that eating sweet potatoes has the same effect.

So that children do not suck their fingers they are smeared with chili.

As mothers who have just given birth are considered to be somewhat weak, they are given a restorative for the next 40 days, which consists of a drink made from the roots of apazote, malva, and scorzonera.

One of the oldest midwives in Mixco. (F. Sunay) showed us the equipment she uses to attend a birth. Carry a bag of alcohol, scissors, which boils 20 minutes in a bowl, Castile appointment to tie the navel, trust to retain your hair, white gabacha, towel, cotton, and a white rag. Before going out to attend a birth of on the altar of his house, a vigil 25 cents. To speed up the delivery, give a "birth" pill bought in a Mixco pharmacy, and for the body to "catch pain," a drink made of cloves and boiled cinnamon. She prefers that the woman swells to give light, because she can do more strength in this way. She only wants the husband to be present to help support her if necessary. Then she helps herself so that she does not try too hard, "and gets out of the womb". Give the parturients a purgative at 8 days and put two drops of lemon in their eyes "to disinfect". If there is hemorrhage, it gives balsamite, atriate, and lambir. He asked who went to his services more, whether indigenous or ladin people (she is indigenous); he answered that equally, in fact in this case influences the low price he charges, although he makes the caveat that if someone ever called her and did not pay for his services afterwards, no longer comes to another call from the same person.

Cramp is supposed to be relieved by drinking the water that results from extinguishing several tangerine shells, or also by taking brandy with cedron or ruda. The same effect occurs when you take an infusion of garlic braids, rapadura, some

anise and orange or tangerine peel. With all this, a branch of the rough is turned off.

According to our informants, the washing of bread dissolved in water with a little brandy or cane honey has also been used with positive results to soothe cramps.

Other medicines consist of an infusion of Santa Maria flower or eating artichoke. Generally, for bilious cramps, water is drunk from the grass of the chicken, and to relieve the colic of the children, they are given to take corn water with tangerine peel or an infusion of mint, cinnamon, and raw lemon.

The bite of a spider or some poisonous insect is cured with curarina fomentation on the affected part.

The pain of the body sides, when they are properly muscular, disappears by applying fomentations of the following preparation: three izote candles are boiled, two or three miltomates, three pieces of guides of whiskey, raw cane sugar, and three pieces of *ocote colorado*

In order to undo the pain in the neck, you put on a compress of chamomile or you apply a cold compress, or you make fomentations of grass of chicken grass with horsetail or apple water with onion.

According to popular belief, there are two kinds of "*mal del ojo*", the physical and the spiritual. The physical is an ailment and irritation and irritation of the eye, it is cured by making lavatories of rose water of Santa Maria, or applying a few drops of lime water, or drinking an infusion of dead flowers, or tea being -is left one night in the evening- the evil of the spiritual *ojo*, is the one believed to have been provoked by a person looking at another -to look with ill intent or to do harm-. This "bad look" can cause any ailment, but in general it is an indefinite disease that may manifest as a cold or seat in children. It is believed to be curable in children by covering their faces, so they don't see anymore, or by putting on bracelets, brooches, or small necklaces that contain red tones. It is believed that the strong color of red rejects the evil of the look

of the person who wants to harm. With the same object, small crosses are also put to the children, as pins.

Rosemary water washes are known as wound cicatrizing.

To cure tonsils, you should make rinses of geranium water, gargle with lemon juice, parsley, cherry leaf water, a flower called chatya, eucalyptus with butter, and fig leaf. For the same purpose, hot chocolate with margarine is taken, or green oak shells are placed over the throat.

To remove the pain caused by the sting of the scorpion, it is enough to eat raw sugar or put a stalk of onion on the affected part.

The aphonia is remedied by drinking water from cinnamon borage, chamomile, and moonshine, or by drinking hot chocolate with chamomile or an infusion of cocoa, dried plum, prune, and a little moonshine.

indigestion is remedied by taking a teaspoon of sugar, one of honey, and one of baking soda-all together- or washing with water from *ojacen* grass with black soap.

To cure the rheumatism, use lemon juice and gas or rub the painful part, covering it with a paper or newspaper, because it is said that this keeps the heat. The following mixture is also used: a turnip, three carrots, an avocado nugget, a head of onion cut into cross, a little bit of creole mustard, and a spoonful of oil. All this is boiled, and then the water is drunk. Also, the pains of rheumatism are calmed by eating artichokes.

To strengthen your eyesight, it is advisable to drink carrot, tomato, and pineapple juices.

When it has received a strong blow, put on the affected part of chopped parsley or take water in which you have boiled a nugget of avocado, beet, and a little



honey. Paper with a little honey is also usually placed over the affected area.

The ear pain is calmed by putting a mint bud plug in the ear, placing a clove of garlic reinserted into the ear, or reshining an izote candle and then pouring water, as hot as possible, into the ear. Ear pain is thought to disappear by blowing the affected ear with smoke from cigarettes made with alhucema.

The stomachache is alleviated by using pericón tea, chamomile water, or sweet bud water when the pain is very strong.

The sty is cured by making tea washes in the eyes. For the same purpose, a few drops of lemon can be put on or a cat's tail can be passed several times through its eyes. Another remedy is to place a bowl over the eye and have someone else throw seven grains of corn on it.

The constipated person is supposed to disappear by applying drops of holy water on his nose every night.

It is used as a conceptive infusion of new buds of the *panta* called *siguapate*. It should be taken every night until it takes effect. Drinking *culantro* water daily is also supposed to have the same effect. however, it is highly advisable to drink raw goat milk. The latter is credited with excellent results.

As a contraceptive, it is recommended to drink the water in which oregano, *altamisa*, and *quinina* have been boiled. Also, to this is put a little white honey (Although there are several people consulted about this remedy, they have not been able to specify how to do it)

It is advisable to drink the water of barley to remedy the inflammation.

It is believed that dizzy turns are cured by repeatedly bathing the patient in water from Altayme, Rhododendron, rosemary, and basil. White basil is attributed a

higher healing percentage against dizzy turns.

Water baths of eucalyptus and rosemary make colds disappear. So that children do not drool, they are given to drink water of anise. The herb called horsetail is also useful for curing smallpox. An infusion made of life stick is drunk to soothe the pains that result when "fluid has left the bones". Water from the nose is used to cure chickenpox and sometimes to soothe a cough. The drunkards are given to drink water of anise to soothe the hiccups.

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Among the most common medicines that the population of Mixco searches in local pharmacies are:

*Pomade de azahares*: for the heart pain; *salicilatos*: for rheumatic pain; *pomade alcanforada*: for stomach bug. (Just try to calm them down, not take them out, because it is thought that it is "bad" to try to expel them) Emollient ointment: for maturing; Phenicide ointment: for infected wounds; Regent's ointment. for the inflamed eye; alfea: for phlegm (spread on a tissue paper is heated by candela light, applied and case alone); Frog ointment; also called green or tuna ointment: for edema or swelling of the feet or stomach; Belladonna ointment; for the mumps (applied together with floripundia).

Horicada ointment: for inflamed breasts (it is also customary for cracked nipples to crush the breast and put the dough in a small bag and insert the nipple into it). Linseed ointment: as a refreshing and also for swelling; apple ointment; body swelling or swelling of the face due to the removal of a tooth. Sweaty ointment: for itching or rash; of valence: to deinflame the kidneys: pink oil (Its application is extreme), for the swelling of the face by toothache. Almond oil (is taken), and they say it is effective for cough. Essence of cloves: for the toothache. Nervino oil: for extreme pains. German spirit: to induce vomiting, especially of those who have exceeded in drinking liquor.