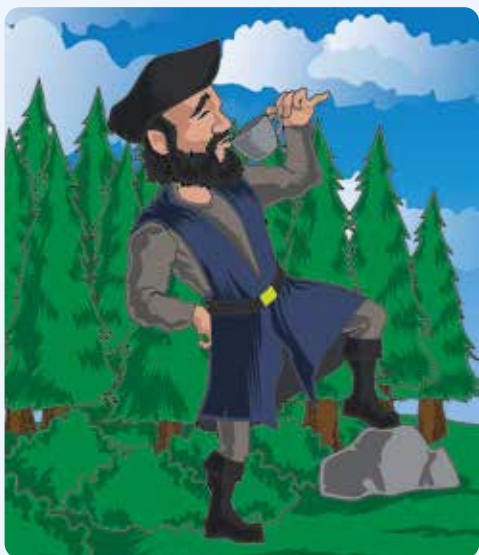


# UNHealthy ideas

Doctors and scientists learn more all the time about how we can stay well and how to heal us if we get sick. Thank goodness we no longer use these old treatments! Can you tell which are real and which we invented?

## GOOD HUMOUR? >>

For centuries, people believed you could only be healthy if four things known as “humours” were properly balanced: yellow bile, black bile, blood and phlegm (pronounced *flem*). If you didn’t have enough of one of these, you would supposedly get sick. It was also believed that whichever humour you had the most of decided what kind of personality you had!



Allen Richard

## << NOT SO MYSTERIOUS

The French explorer Jacques Cartier was alarmed in the early days of 1536 when his crew became weak, with rotting teeth and feet and lower legs that swelled and turned dark. He decided they must have caught a disease from the First Nations people at Stadacona (now Quebec City). Not only was he wrong, it was those same First Nations people who fixed the French up by making a tea from cedar. The sailors were short of vitamin C from months without fresh fruit and vegetables, causing an illness called scurvy.

## WORSE, NOT BETTER >>

Have you ever heard the expression, “The cure is worse than the disease”? Well, that’s true of a lot of treatments from the old days. For instance, for hundreds of years, people thought if you were sick, one of the best ways to re-balance your system was to let out some of your blood. Still sick? More blood-letting! Of course it didn’t work, and often made people sicker.



## STEP RIGHT UP! >>

Something known as patent medicines became popular in the mid-1800s. While some might have actually treated a problem, most were just mixtures of stuff made up by someone with no medical training at all. These pills, syrups and salves claimed to cure just about everything the inventors could think of, from nervousness to sore feet to headaches.



## << SWEET DREAMS

Some settlers brought strange ideas with them to Canada about how to cure sickness. For instance, in the Yorkshire region of England, people believed that burning a nightingale’s feather and holding it under your nose would prevent something called “brain fever.” When they arrived here and couldn’t find nightingales, they substituted feathers from a chickadee or blackbird.



## << CHILLY, NOT COLD

Until very recently, lots of people believed that you could catch a cold if you went outside while your hair was wet. And you may still know someone who insists you’ll also get the sniffles if you sleep with your window open. Both of those things can make you *feel* cold, but they’re not how you *catch* a cold. That happens when someone with a cold sneezes or coughs on you, or you touch them.