

## From Ancient Remedies to Modern Medicine

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**Annotation:** The history of medicine is a chronicle of how humans have learned to treat diseases and injuries over the span of thousands of years. It began with the ancient civilizations of humans during which they used plants, herbs and natural remedies to cure illnesses. For example civilizations like Greeks, Egyptians, and Chinese etc.

**Keywords:** Hippocrates, Avicenna, germ theory, Ayurveda, Sushruta, Chinese medicine, acupuncture.

A Greek doctor named Hippocrates is known as “father of medicine” because of his great contribution in separating medicine from superstitions. In middle ages of time, influence of religion, prayers and rituals was very much on medicine. However, the Islamic world works to preserve and expand medical knowledge by the help of great scholars of that time named AVICENNA with his important medical texts like “THE CANON OF MEDICINE” which become a standard medical text in European Universities of that time. The invention of microscope in the 17<sup>th</sup> century let the scientists like Antonie von Leeuwenhoek to discover microorganisms, which led to development of germ theory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch. This theory showed us that diseases are caused by tiny organisms, changing the way illnesses were treated and prevented. During the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century, medicine advances rapidly with the discovery of vaccines, antibiotics, anesthesia and new surgical techniques. The development of anesthesia made surgeries less painful, and much more effective. The greatest discovery of that time Antibiotics also helped humanity by lowering mortality rate to a great extent. The history of medicine is a journey from primitive natural remedies to now a day’s advance and efficacious treatment. This shows man kind’s constant and constructive effort to understand and improve healthcare system.

**ANCIENT MEDICINES EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA:** Ancient Egyptian medicine [3000 BC] involves magic and practical kind of treatment methods. Great physicians like IMHOTEP, a physician of his time documented his work on medicine on Papyrus scrolls such as Edwin Smith Papyrus which is the oldest work on surgical techniques. In Mesopotamia medical practices includes treatment and diagnosis by the help of surgery and plant based medications.

**INDIA AND CHINA:** In India, the practice of Ayurveda, which dated back to around 1500 BC emphasizes a balance of humors of body and used plant based herbs, food habits and techniques

of surgery from the book Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. Sushruta one of the prominent figures in Indian medicine history is known as the Father of Indian surgery, well known for his work in developing surgical methods and tools. Some of his groundbreaking operations include Rhinoplasty [remaking of nose], removal of dead fetus etc.

The origin of Chinese medicine emerged in the Shamanistic Shang dynasty period [1766-1122BC]. During this time the religious deity was called Shang Di who was believed to live in heaven in an imperial court by dead ancestors. Shang di believed that illness was caused by either; upsetting an ancestor and consequently being cursed or that a demon entered the body that caused illness. Traditional Chinese medicine gradually developed over next few techniques like herbal medicine, acupuncture, bleeding, moxibustion massage and cupping. Acupuncture continued to grow and started gain popularity in other neighboring countries. Today in China most of the hospitals offers western and Chinese medicine completely integrated, this integration displays incredible growth of medicine in China.

**ISLAMIC GOLDEN ERA OF MEDICINE:** The Islamic golden era [8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries] gain significant medical developments. Prominent figures like AVICENNA [980-1037 c] wrote “Canon of medicine” which was a standard texts for medicine. AL-RAZI, who differentiated small pox from measles and wrote about diseases and treatments,. Islamic hospitals were advanced for their time by the means of surgery, pharmacies and renowned training system for doctors.

**RENAISSANCE [14<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> century] emphasized on observation and dissection .**Vesalius revolutionized anatomy with his detailed and accurate drawings in “ De humani corporis fabric” Paracelsus introduces use of chemicals in treatment and laid down groundwork for pharmacology.

**FOUNDATION OF MODERN MEDICINE [19<sup>th</sup> century]:** In this century profound transformations in medicine takes place. Development of germ theory by Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch established that cause of death is microorganisms. Antiseptic techniques developed by Joseph Lister, significantly reduced postoperative infections. The discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming in 1928 started the antibiotic era that transforms the treatment of bacterial infections. The development of a number of pharmaceuticals, from insulin for diabetes to chemotherapy for cancer provides us expended treatment options.

**MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY:** With time advancements placed in technology revolutionized treatment and diagnostic procedures. Invention of x-rays by Wilhelm Roentgen in 1895, the development of CT and MRI scanners and introduction of laparoscopic surgery transformed the medical practice.

**VACCINATION:** Campaigns for vaccination led to eradication of smallpox in 1980 and significant control of deadly diseases like polio, measles. Nowadays vaccination is one of the crucial aspect of medicine for eradication of many diseases from our society. This led to control and check on a number of diseases which priorly led to death of a large fraction of population.

**CONCLUSION:** The history of medicine reflects how our understandings of health and diseases have grown over the thousands of years. In ancient times peoples used herbs, magic and simple surgeries. With the flow of time various cultures from all over the world began to observe and document their findings more systematically that laid down the foundation of modern medicine. The journey of medicine has been all about moving from guesswork to science, from simple treatment methods to advance technology and from individual efforts to global cooperations. With all aimed to better understanding and treating diseases to improve mankind’s health. As medicine continues to evolve with integration of technology, personalized care and global health perspective that promises a future where healthcare is more effective and accessible for all. It shows how mankind is improving their health and lives through curiosity, research and innovation.

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