



Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain

MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN
1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN

INFORMATION SHEET: 2

SECUNDUM ARTEM

SECUNDUM ARTEM (LATIN 'TO MAKE FAVOURABLY WITH SKILL'). THE SKILL OF THE APOTHECARY AND PHARMACIST TO MANUFACTURE MEDICINAL PREPARATIONS.

HISTORY

Over the centuries medicines have come in many forms. It has been the work of the Apothecary, the Chemist and Druggist and the Pharmacist to manufacture these preparations and to present them in forms acceptable to patients.

Ancient medicine consisted mainly of plant and animal extracts prepared by soaking in water or wine. Sweet substances would be added to flavour and make them more palatable. In more modern times forms such as pills, tablets, cachets, capsules etc. have rendered medicines virtually tasteless.

For external use, ingredients were incorporated into oils, fats and waxes.

The Pharmacist has had to manufacture in excess of sixty preparations over the years.

Listed here are many of those preparations.



Applications	Liquid preparations for skin application.
Bougies	Moulded items for use in the urethra and nose.
Cachets	Rice paper packages for individual doses of powders.
Capsules	Gelatin packages for individual powder doses.
Collodions	Liquids that dry to a film when applied to the skin.
Confections	Flavoured, thick, sweet preparations of herb extracts.
Creams	Light textured semi-solid preparations applied to the skin.
Decoctions	Liquids prepared by boiling herbs in water then straining.
Draughts	Single doses of liquid medicine.
Dusting Powders	Medicated powders for skin application.
Ear Drops	Oil or Water based liquids for infection or wax removal.
Elixirs	Flavoured liquid medicines.
Emulsions	Milky medicines of oil suspended in water.
Enemas	Liquids for injection into the rectum.
Extracts	Liquid or solid substances extracted from herbs.
Eye Drops	Liquid preparations for eye conditions.
Eye Lotions	Liquid preparations to bathe the eyes.

Eye Ointments	Greasy preparations for eye conditions.
Gargles	Liquids for throat infections.
Glycerins	Skin preparations containing Glycerin for soothing.
Glycetracts	Solutions of drugs in Glycerin.
Granules	Soluble dry powder lumps, usually taken while effervescing in water.
Infusions	Produced by soaking herbs in water to extract active ingredients.
Inhalations	Aromatic substances which are added to hot water and inhaled.
Insufflations	Powders for inhalation.
Irrigations	Liquids for washing out wounds.
Juices	Liquids produced by squeezing herbs.
Lamellae	Discs of medicated gelatin for use in the eye.
Linctuses	Syrupy liquids for the treatment of coughs.
Liniments	External preparations to rub in for muscle conditions.
Lotions	External liquids to apply to the skin.
Lozenges	Tablets to be sucked for throat infections and coughs.
Mixtures	Liquid medicine containing various ingredients.
Mouthwashes	Rinses for the mouth.
Mucilages	Thickened liquids for suspending substances.
Nasal Drops	Watery or oily liquids for conditions of the nose.
NasalWashes	Liquids to wash nasal passages.
Oils	Extracted from plants by squeezing or obtained from mineral sources.
Ointments	Thick preparations to apply to the skin.
Oxymels	Liquids containing honey as a sweetener.
Paints	Medicated liquids painted on to small areas of skin.
Pastes	Thick preparations to hold medicaments next to the skin.
Pastilles	Jellies to suck for mouth disorders and coughs.
Pessaries	Moulded preparations, for insertion into the vagina.
Pills	Spherical solid preparations of drugs for swallowing.
Plasters	Medicaments in an adhesive base spread on material to give prolonged contact with the skin.
Powders	a) Individual doses of medicine wrapped in paper. b) Bulk powder, doses are measured with a spoon or graduated measure.
Poultices	Thick Preparations applied to areas of the skin on cloth to draw out infection.
Snuffs	Medicated powders to be sniffed.
Sprays	Liquid preparations for the nose or throat.
Suppositories	Moulded preparations for insertion into the rectum.
Suspensions	Mixtures containing suspended insoluble substances.
Syrups	Sugar solutions for flavouring drug extracts.
Tablets	Compressed medicated powders for swallowing.
Tinctures	Alcoholic extracts of plants.
Vinegars	Vinegar used as a flavoured base for medicinal ingredients.
Waters	Water mixed with herbs and used for flavouring.
Wines	Wine or Sherry used, a flavoured base for medicinal ingredients.

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The illustration overleaf is from a Museum postcard showing an apothecary preparing Theriac – a treacle containing numerous ingredients to combat poisoning. The picture is a hand-coloured woodcut from *Ortus Sanitatis (Mainz 1491)*; *Tracatus de animalibus cxlvi*

This information sheet is also available in a large font size.
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