

medical drugs

introduction

We use medical drugs for so many different health problems that it's sometimes hard to imagine a world without them. Whether it's syrup for a tickly cough or prescription medicines for something more serious, we rely on medical drugs to help us recover from all kinds of different health conditions. But the drugs we have today are the result of thousands of years of development and innovation, involving contributions from a variety of different peoples and cultures. Indeed, 1000 years ago, Muslim physicians were making some incredible discoveries that would lead to the development of the highly effective drugs we rely on today. The science of drugs (or "pharmacology" as it is known) owes a huge debt of gratitude to people like Ibn Sina who described almost 700 different drug preparations, or Al Kindi who made vital contributions to our understanding of the correct dosages of certain drugs and their effect on patients. So next time you take a pill or swallow some cough syrup, remember the debt we owe to the amazing physicians of the medieval Islamic world.

questions to think about

- Think of a time that a medical drug made you feel better.
- Do you, or anyone you know, rely on a medical drug to make life easier? What does this drug do?
- What illnesses can now be cured thanks to medical drugs?
- How has life expectancy changed over the past 100 years? How have medical drugs contributed to this?



An early Arabic medical book



where to find out more

What is pharmacology?:

<https://www.bps.ac.uk/about/about-pharmacology/what-is-pharmacology>

Medicine through time:

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/topics/zwd82hv>

Learn more about the history of medicine:

<http://broughttolife.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife>

Medical care in Muslim Civilisation:

<http://www.1001inventions.com/node/1592>

Medical books in Muslim Civilisation:

<http://www.1001inventions.com/WorldHealthDay>

The Islamic roots of pharmacy:

<http://www.1001inventions.com/pharmacy>