



Old Wives' Tales: The History of Remedies, Charms and Spells

Mary Chamberlain

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We may all know that dandelions make us wet the bed, and that stewed prunes are a cure for constipation, but how many of us were aware that a poultice of chicken manure is a remedy for baldness? Or that eel liver will aid a difficult labour? The woman healer is as old as history. For millennia she has been doctor, nurse and midwife, and even in the age of modern medicine her wisdom is handed down in the form of old wives' tales. Using extensive research into archives and original texts, and numerous conversations with women in city and countryside, Mary Chamberlain presents a stimulating challenge to orthodox medicine and an illuminating history of female wisdom which goes back to the earliest times. What are old wives' tales? Where do they come from? Do they really work? These questions, and many more, are answered in this fascinating compendium of remedies and cures handed down from mother to daughter from the beginning of time.

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