

# NLM Traveling Exhibitions

## PR Information



[www.nlm.nih.gov/pickyourpoison](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pickyourpoison)

The National Library of Medicine produced *Pick Your Poison: Intoxicating Pleasures and Medical Prescriptions*, guest curated by historian and educator Manon Parry, PhD (University of Amsterdam).

The traveling exhibition and companion website explore the factors that have shaped the changing definitions of some of our most potent drugs, from medical miracle to social menace. Throughout the history of America, people have used mind altering drugs. While some of those drugs are socially acceptable, others are outlawed because of their toxic, and intoxicating, characteristics. These classifications have shifted at different times in history and will continue to change.

*Pick Your Poison* includes an [education component](#) with a K-12 lesson plan and two university modules. A [digital gallery](#) features a curated selection of fully digitized items from the historical collections of the NLM, which are also available in their entirety in [NLM Digital Collections](#).

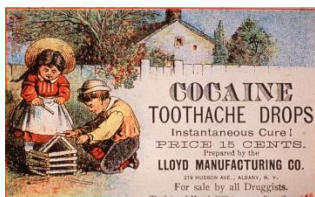
Please include this courtesy line with all public announcements about the project:

**The National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition and companion website.**

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Host venues for *Pick Your Poison* receive the following PR images. For your reference, there are brief captions for the images. Please include their corresponding **courtesy** noted below when using them.



In the late 19th century, physicians recommended cocaine for the treatment of hay fever, asthma, melancholy, and other ailments. This advertisement for toothache drops, containing cocaine, promised instantaneous relief, which likely was due to the substance's anesthetic properties.

Advertisement for Cocaine Toothache Drops, Lloyd Manufacturing Co., 1885

**Courtesy National Library of Medicine**



For generations, Native Americans have smoked pipes full of dried tobacco leaves for spiritual and social purposes and used the plant in medicinal remedies. Tobacco became known among English settlers as "God's remedy" for its many uses.

"*Nicotiana Tabacum*," *American Medical Botany*, Jacob Bigelow, 1817-1820

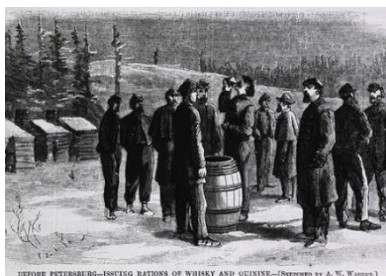
**Courtesy National Library of Medicine**



Manufacturers of patent medicines, which were sold directly to the public without a physician's prescription, realized the popularity of alcohol-based remedies. J. C. Ayer marketed a number of different tonics that included alcohol for a variety of ailments, including the Ayer's Ague Cure for malaria.

"Ayer's Ague Cure is Warranted to Cure Fever & Ague and All Malarial Disorders", 1800s

**Courtesy National Library of Medicine**



During the 1800s, many physicians endorsed the medicinal properties of alcohol as a treatment for malaria or to improve overall feelings of wellbeing. During the American Civil War, military leaders issued whisky and quinine to soldiers.

W. Warren, "Before Petersburg—Issuing Rations of Whisky and Quinine," *Harpers Weekly*, 1865

**Courtesy National Library of Medicine**