Remedies We'd Rather Forget

These remedies are shared for fun and are not recommended for use.

Beware the Ides of March

WE KIDS dreaded the month of March. That's when our parents would mix equal amounts of yellow powdered sulfur and molasses for a home remedy to be taken before breakfast each day.

The dosage depended on your age, from a teaspoon to a soup spoon, which is what our parents took. It was meant to clean out our systems and get us ready for a healthy summer, which we'd all have.

—Myrtle Durand, Apple Valley, Minnesota

Scrambled by Egg Potion

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW had a recipe for a cough medicine that really worked—you'd stop coughing just so you didn't have to swallow the awful stuff!

Into 1 pint of vinegar, she'd drop a whole, unbroken egg and let it sit overnight. By morning, the vinegar would have eaten away the eggshell, leaving the yolk and the membrane surrounding it.

Next, she'd break and remove the membrane, leaving the yolk. After beating the vinegar and egg, she'd add a box of dark brown sugar and beat the mixture again.

When it was finished, you were to take a few swallows. Trust me, you wouldn't cough again!

—Herschel H. Luce Jr., Winter Garden, Florida

Tough Treatments

MY FATHER lived by an old Scottish cold remedy passed on by my

grandfather that, to us kids, was worse than the cold.

After we'd take a hot bath to open our pores, a clothespin wrapped in cloth layers was dipped in acetic acid and rubbed on our chests and backs. To add insult to injury, the area was rubbed with Vicks VapoRub and covered by a flannel cloth.

By morning, the cold was gone, but the memory of that treatment of the 1930s and '40s remains with me forever.

—Margaret Dow Bridges, Montague, Massachusetts

Syrupy Solution

DURING THE deadly flu epidemic of 1918 and '19, my grandfather would slice an onion into a pie pan each evening. He would sprinkle the onion with a little granulated sugar.

The pie pan was placed near a heat register. In the morning, my grandpa would eat the syrupy concoction. He gave credit to the effort for his not having caught the flu, despite most of his family members becoming ill.

—Iris Doksansky, Fremont, Nebraska