

By Nancy Whitaker

A TOOTHPICK AND THE FLU

The flu has been rampant this year and I was fortunate to catch it. On Sunday evening, I felt like I had a scratchy throat and felt like I may be coming down with perhaps a sinus infection or maybe one of my allergies.

When I awoke the next day, to my surprise and dismay, my voice sounded like a man's. My eyes were swollen, I was coughing and ached all over. I thought, "Oh no. This is Monday, I really need to go to work."

But, with a head that felt like it was going to burst and a tummy which was rolling and grumbling, I decided I was in no shape to be around anyone.

It is so strange losing your voice, especially if you are a talker like I am. I called into the office and then made a doctor's appointment for that same day. Needless to say nobody recognized my voice at work or at the doctors office. I must have sounded pretty bad.

I have had sinus infections before, but this one was the "King" of all I had ever encountered. Every inch of my 4'10" frame ached and all I wanted to do was just get in bed and sleep.

I did make it into the doctor's office where I got a shot and some medicine. I found myself drinking lots of water and juice. I armed myself with my Vicks salve, nose spray and some over the counter pain relievers.

I got a book and thought I would just hunker down until I felt better. I expected I would probably feel much better in the morning.

But then all I could imagine were those little green bugs from that popular commercial having a party in my sinuses, head and throat.

This was one time when I was glad to live in the time of modern medicine and did not really want to return to the days of yore and to the times when Grandma used to treat us for the “croup.”

Now, of course, my grandma considered herself a doctor of sorts as she knew a lot about various teas and herbs that was bound to either “kill or cure.”

Brewing her famous tonic on top of the stove was a common thing for her to do in the spring and in the fall. The concoction was made of things such as dandelions, honey, chamomile leaves, cinnamon, cloves and elderberries. I am not sure what else she put in her “medicine,” but if we ever got a cold or flu, we had to drink it.

She also generously used a tube of salve that burnt your skin called Musterole. This was to burn all the germs out and, of course, kill and burn any bug in your body.

To add to my suffering on top of my flu, I was barefoot in the house and somehow a toothpick was in the fringe of a rug and I stepped on it.

It went in my foot at least 1/4 inch and I thought I was going to die. I had to tug and pull but I finally got it out. I then said to myself, “I think I must be falling apart.”

Now my grandma would have mixed up a poultice of some kind of fat meat and turpentine and call it “drawing salve.” However, I did not want to go that route, so I turned to antibiotic salve and a bandage.

Now, Grandma, I am not knocking your medicines of the early years, but taking a pill and using antibiotic salve is a much better treatment.

This has not really been my week, so to speak, but I am glad to say, I am back to work and am very grateful for modern medicine.

Do you have any old remedies for the flu? Have you ever made a tonic or used a stinky hot salve? Let me know and I'll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.