

Herbal Medicines and Pharmacies

Muslim doctors experimented with the treatment of disease through herbal medicines. Plants such as coriander (an herb of the carrot family) were used for their medicinal powers. Sedatives (drugs used to calm or tranquilize), including hashish (a strong narcotic), were used to kill pain during surgery. Al-Zahrawi, a Muslim doctor from Spain, began using antiseptics (substances derived from herbs that kill germs) to cleanse wounds, a practice unheard of in other parts of Europe until centuries later. Ibn Sina, a famous Persian healer, designed treatments involving the use of herbs and medicinal plants. In addition to making advances in herbal medicine, pharmacies developed in Baghdad to provide medications to heal illnesses. Pharmacies filled prescriptions much as present-day drug stores do. Drugs were considered so important and dangerous that they were carefully supervised, both during preparation and while in storage.