

Teacher's *George Washington and Medicine*: Findings

1. Write the title of the exhibition section that you are assigned:

Title of one of the three assigned sections

2. What health issues are mentioned in this section and whom did they affect?

Home and Hardship: fits, fevers, and agues among the Washingtons; tuberculosis for Lawrence Washington; fevers, infections, breathing problems, anthrax, smallpox, malaria for George Washington; epilepsy for Martha Parke Curtis (Patsy)

In Sickness and in Health: dysentery, anthrax, pneumonia, skin cancer seasonal malaria, lung problems, rheumatism, hearing loss, and failing eye-sight for George Washington; measles and gall bladder disease for Martha Washington

At Journey's End: cold, acute swelling and obstruction of his airways for George Washington

3. What were some specific medical treatments available at the time? Include what conditions the treatments were for.

Home and Hardship: tuberculosis—warm sea air in Barbados; patent medicine and ingredients for homemade medications including ipecacuane, diascordium, tincture of myrrh, and spirits of lavender for various treatments before a doctor was called; epilepsy—warm mineral spring baths, mercury pills, diets, and iron rings

In Sickness and in Health: bad eye sight—eye glasses; bad teeth—tooth extraction and false teeth; vegetables and herbs for home remedies

At Journey's End: difficulty breathing—bloodletting, purgatives, emetics, enemas, blistering, menthol vapor

4. List the health issues mentioned in this section that still affect us and how we treat them today.

Student answers may include the following:

measles, smallpox—vaccination; tuberculosis—antibiotic medicine; fever and infection—antibiotic or antiviral medications; dysentery—clean water and drinks with electrolytes; malaria—anti-malaria pills; bad eyes—eye surgeries, glasses, and contact lenses; rheumatism—anti-pain and anti-inflammation medications; bad teeth—fillings, extraction, crowns, tooth implants, dentures; etc.