

# Rappaccini's daughter in modern day: medicines made from poison

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Modern medical science uses poisons, such as mold, venom, and even toxic bacteria, to produce agents that can cure patients of diseases or immunize them against the effects of poisons. Snake venom is used to cure snake bites.

Penicillin, a common and well-known antibiotic, is made from bread mold. The life-saving blood thinner Coumadin (warfarin) is made from rat poison! If people would look deeper into the medications they're taking, they would most likely find hundreds of medicines are derived from poisonous substances. Snake venom is the most commonly- known poison- turned- cure. Most people know that when bitten by a snake, the venom of that snake can be used as an antidote if given to the right specialists in time. Even if the snake responsible for the bite isn't caught, most hospitals have anti-venom on hand. The venom is harvested and small amounts of the venom are injected into mammals that have antibody immune responses, such as sheep, rabbits, and horses.

The venom is then taken out of the animal's blood, purified, and the hospital is able to keep it on hand in case of emergencies. Most snake bites require specific anti-venom. For example, rattle snakes need the rattle snake anti-venom. Sometimes though, the chemical make-up of the venom is close enough that one snake's anti-venom can be useful against another snake's venom. However, most people don't know that scientists are now studying snake behavior and have even been extracting venom from them in hopes of coming up with a one-time cure against all snake bites.

Probably the most commonly used cure made from poison is penicillin, yet it's not as well-known as snake venom. This common antibiotic is actually made from bread mold. A slice of bread is exposed to a high temperature environment until a blue-green mold begins to develop. The bread is then cut into small pieces put in storage to incubate for five days. The mold is then mixed with other antibodies to create penicillin within the next two weeks.

The making of penicillin, an antibiotic, however, is not that uncommon. Most antibiotics are made from bacteria, mold or fungi. One of the most shocking and revolting poison- turned medicines is Coumadin (warfarin). This blood thinner often given to hospitalized patients to save lives is made from rat poison. Patients who have heart attacks, cardiac problems or strokes are often prescribed Coumadin. Coumadin can kill humans in overdose, as most medicines can, although a single taste will kill rats.

Some of the most common antibiotics and life-saving medicines are made from some of the deadliest poisons on earth. Modern medical science has figured out a way to use these poisons- mold, venom, bacteria, fungi, and even common rat poison- to produce agents that can cure patients of diseases or immunize them against the effects of poisons. If people would look deeper into the medications they're taking, they would most likely find hundreds of medicines are derived from poisonous substances.