

# German-Russian Folk Medicine

Copyright 1996, Dale Wahl

*This document may be freely used for personal, nonprofit purposes or linked by other WWW sites. It may also be shared with others, provided the header with copyright notice is included. However, it may not be republished in any form without permission of the copyright owner.*

The following data is taken from the writings of my, Dale Lee Wahl, great-grandmother, Katharina Wall, geboren Scheuffele.

(1) This data was translated in August 1995 by Oliver Weiss of Historical Translations, Woburn MA and edited by Marty McMahon. This work may be freely copied for nonprofit purposes. (4-29- 1996)

Against Growths

1) [heartburn] and [...] leave from the ribs, like our lord from the manger amen.

2) For Gout of the Intestines; O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you jewish city where they crucified Christ the savior, he has spilled his flesh and blood, that is good against [Wirfel, Werfel and gout of the intestines amen.

3) Against gout and [flowing gout], stroke, brain stroke and all other strokes, I complain to God Father Son and Holy Spirit, spirit, conquerer of strokes and, who takes them away at all times and makes them disappear like the dead in the grave, that God may help you amen.

4) Against warts on fingers Iza Vaza all Ata Iza Artiga illsisza Zola, bound around the Finger for 24 hours, then buried under the eave around sunrise.

5) For the [pig] in humans: Thigh pig as God the holy spirit Thigh pig as God the son Thigh or arm pig as a stone amen. Against Fever

6) Here I'm standing on the dam, waiting for the most holy man, who can take my 77 fevers from me +++ amen(2).

7) Against head-fever(3). "I stand on wood and look for wood, for a green twig that will take my fever and my head-fever from me" +++ amen.

8) If you have scurvy or stomatitis, or the [brei(4)], then I blow my breath into your mouth +++amen.

9) Against fever. "A stork without tongue, and a wolf without lung and a turtle-dove without gall[bladder], that takes the 77 fevers from you." +++ amen.

10) Against gout, heartworm, wet worm, grey gout and intestinal gout, "I beg you most sincerely to lie down and not to stir until our virgin mother gives birth to her other son" +++ amen.

11) If the child can't sleep: "nightmare(5), nightmare, I forbid you [to enter] my house and yard, my chamber door, my bed, until you have climbed all mountains, have swum all waters, and ridden on all fences, then the dear day comes back into my house." Write this on a paper, then place it under the head of the child +++ amen before you go to sleep, but read it out loud first.

12) Against the [urine] worm: The Lord God plowed a golden field and made three furrows, he found three worms, the first is the [quarrel] worm, the other the [avarice] worm and the third the [urine] worm. "I forbid you to eat the flesh of humans" +++ amen.

13) Against the schussblader(6) / our Lord Jesus Christ breaks skin and bladder by his holy veins +++ amen.

14) A cure for the stitches: roast salt and pour wine or water over it, then place that under the side [of the body]

15) Against the red murrain [erysipelas] "Red murrain and dragon cross a puddle. Dragon drinks from it, Red Murrain must drown in it" +++ amen.

16) "These are 9 Roses(7) these are 8 Roses These are 7 Roses these are 6 Roses These are 5 Roses these are 4 Roses These are 3 Roses these are 2 Roses That is 1 Rose, that is no Rose. Rose, you bloom and threaten now and never." The Lord's prayer. The rose can be recognized like this: A little black dot in the middle, then a yellow ring around it, then a red one, then a green one.

17) Against bleeding of the heart "Upon the grave of our Lort God, there are 3 lilies, the first is God's might, the second is God's strength, the third is God's will, bleeding heart, stop, stop, stop still."

18) Against throwing up: grind eggshell and add lemon juice, and drink that. 19) Against dysentery, take castor oil and have a spoonfull of that(8).

20) "Katharine," or whatever the name may be, "you have [sprained] yourself, Jesus Christ was hanged, the hanging didn't do him anything, neither did the spraining."

21) To stop bleeding: "fortunate hour, fortunate wound, fortunate was the day that our Lord Jesus was born." +++ amen.

22) "Stroke, I beseech you, in the name of God Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that you go away and become less all day and night, like the dead body in the grave" +++ amen.

23) For the mother(9) [Take] officinal flowers for a bath, Coriander and black rooster feathers for smoking(10), and whey or Camomille water for douches. A mother salve to put on, halfway above the navel.

24) Against back pain it is good to put on cream and egg whites.

25) When the bleeding(11) starts, put on a cloth with vinegar. [Safrichblutst(12)] and small velvet roses are good to promote the bleeding. Double velvet roses are good to quench it. Nusshez(13) is good to end the period. The Lord's prayer is also good, when prayed up ". . of the evil."

26) Peas are good if the afterbirth won't come. Roast and grind them, then put a teaspoon full in one cup of boiling water and make tea of it. And [gwendel(14)] are good to induce labor.

27) If the afterbirth has grown attached, roast onions and put them on / white onion is good against post-natal contractions, you need to press out three drops of juice and take that with sugar and water.

28) Against the wild fire(15), spark two flints straight in the face [of the patient], prunes are also good against the wild fire. Against black pox, boil prunes and put them on warm. Figs are good as well. Against hepatitis, it is good to hollow out a carrot, piss in it and hang it into the chimney.

30) Against sty of the eye, put 9 barley grains on the oven.

31) Against dropsy, it is good to use 10 [ounces] of camphor, 1/4 [ounces] alum and half a quart of water. Grind the alum, scrape the camphor, then boil it in water, wash with this every evening as far as the dropsy goes, then wrap up in a beercloth, repeat all that until it is better. Coffee without sugar is good to induce labor.

32) For the mother, heat a stone and drop vinegar on it for a bath. Further put upper bread crust and lard into a pan and heat it until the the bread has soaked up all the lard it can, then put it on warm.

33) Fish oil is good to cleanse the body. If you take it, it heals what is not healthy in the body.

34) Against sore eyes, spread sour cream and egg whites on a cloth and put it on.

35) Against bed wetting in a female, it is good to prepare young mice with other meat and to eat that, or to pee in a grave where a man is to be buried, but only when no one is around. A man should also pee in a grave, but where a woman is to be buried, and early in the morning.

36) Against stomach cramps, it is good to take apricot oil or pit. If you can't urinate, write the four main waters of the world on a piece of paper, namely Zisohn Gibe Hiddekkel and Ihrath(16) +++ amen. Hang that around your neck.

38) Against pain: "Jesus Christ is the man of pains, who can heal all aches and illness" +++ amen. A Fig-bandage is good to put on swollen glands.

39) Against worms in the body: Peter and Jesus were plowing the field. They plowed 4 furrows, and plowed up three worms, one is white, the other black and the third is red, thus all worms are dead +++ amen.

40) Against arthritis: mix black pepper and white vinegar and let it sit for 24 hours, then wash the limbs with it.

41) Hazelnuts are also good for any wound. Chew them and put them on. If you can't urinate, boil rosehip and drink the water, or use parsely seeds or root.

42) "I go through a red forest, in the red forest is a red church, in the red church is a red altar, on the red altar lies a red bread, next to the red bread lies a red knife, I take the red knife and cut the red bread, that is good against tumor and red murrain" +++ amen. Against bed wetting make tea from dandelion flowers and drink it. For burns, move 6 [matches] around it [the burn] and say this:

43) "Rose and burn, you shall stand still, you shan't sting nor burn, as Jesus hung on the Cross" +++ amen. 44) For the mother [uterus]. "[Bera] mother, I beseech thee, you shall stick to the back, your proper place, or else, this, my wife, goes to her grave" +++ amen. Against Dropsy, take juniper berries, grind them and fry them in butter. Put that on. Make a liqueur and drink that. Smoke the feet with them. Wear a warm cloth around you.

45) If the afterbirth won't come, heat cow manure. Bread soaked in milk is good as well.

46) Against constipation, rub the body with pork lard every evening for 14 days. 47) Against consumption: "Good morning, little tree, I complain to you! The first bird that flies over you will take my child's consumption and weight loss with it." +++ amen

48) For an inner [Dorweg] "Everybody's Saturday, and the Jew's Sunday, [Dorweg], avoid human flesh like the Jew avoids pork" +++ amen.

49) This is for [osteoporosis] and bone-worm "You wild and unnamed one, I have you in my hand, you must die, young or old" +++ amen.

49) Against the worm, [jealously] worm [avarice] worm [quarrel] worm and [hair worm. [Go to the cemetery] "I plow three furrows, I plow up three worms, the first is white, the second is black, the third is red, that is the bitter death of all worms" +++ amen.

50) For tumors and gangrene. "A holy woman went over the land, tumor decrease, and burning gangrene, decrease and don't increase" +++ amen.

51) If the afterbirth won't come, eat a raw onion. 52) If the [uterus] won't stay in its place, then take some embers, place them in a dish, drop tea on them and wear them in a cloth. 53) Rye flour is also good if the uterus won't stay in its place. Bake a cake from it with wine and keep it warm on the oven.

54) It is also good for the uterus, if it is out of sorts, to make a bath and add savory to the water. The next day, make a bath from 2 gallons of milk, but only wash the limbs in it and eat three spoons of milk, then drape a blanket around you and sweat, but rub yourself after every bath, morning and night, with lard and [lenement]. The food has to be unsalted, it consists of chicken and beef, make pudding from it. Make milk pudding and cream pudding. Tea. Pancake pudding and continue the bath for 8 days. For the following eight days, start with the pills on Wednesday, and eat one pill every three days, and make a douche with cheese water(17), 1 1/2 cups, and when the mother is back in her place, put a bandage on, a brown one, on the belly side, just above the navel. Cut through the black part and drape it around the sides, starting from the back. Heat lard and boil wine with herbs.

55) "Mother, lift thee, mother move along, mother go back to your place, where Jesus Christ commanded you to be" +++ amen.

56) For the hard of hearing, grind black radishes on the grinding-iron, and keep the juice in a little bottle, and, whenever necessary, drop it in the ears.

57) Against bedwetting, burn ram's hooves, grind them and take them with coffee. 58) Against hair worm, it is good to wash with cooling-water(18) from the blacksmith.

59) Hot milk is good against diarrhea.

60) Against inflammation of the skin, use sweet cream and powder, and put that on.

61) Against the head-fever say: "Head, go on and go to rest like the sun does", and press the head crosswise as you say this. +++ amen.

62) The water of molten March snow is good to heal hernia.

63) Mother bandage: Incense 10 i[ota](19), Colophonium 10i, Camphor 10i, Cotton 10i, Alcohol 10i.

64) Against corns, it is good to use the lead paper in which tea is wrapped. Burn that and put it on the corn. X To get a dog used to you: Give him three chunks of chewed bread. X So that the chickens lay many eggs, give them rabbit pills(20), mixed with bran and

hempseed. If a horse has been stolen, turn all your furniture upside down and leave it like that until the horse has returned home.

65) If a woman's mother [uterus] has [sung](21) with the child, then take good, clear glass, grind it and take a pinch of that at night, before you go to bed. If you still feel like that in the morning, you can take another pinch of that ground glass, then it should be all right. [Most of the following section is too light to be read from a photocopy. The original will yield the whole text]

66) Against diarrhea, it is good to use oak rind [..] and take that oak paste and burn [...] soup [...]

67) Against living [dorweg] it is good to take unsalted [...] and have [...] it is also good to [...] use the moon, when the moon is [...] 68) There is one more thing that's good for living [dorweg]. Take the marrow from the stems of the sunrose [sunflower], burn it, then mix spit with the ashes and make that into a salve and put that on. 69) It is good against hair worm to roast 9 big white beans, then grind them into a flour, add sweet cream until it turns into a salve and put that on.

70) [...] consumption, take a cloth and [...]

71) One gallon of [gleden](22) root and 3 gallons of water and boil that, reducing it to half, then add 1 1/2 cups of alcohol, and keep that. Against aches in the limbs, take 1 part vinegar and 3 parts of that water, and boil it with the vinegar, and rub your limbs with that.

72) [crossed out] to induce labor, use a pinch of [regulating powder] in half a cup of cold coffee.

73) Good against heartburn is the water from a horse's mouth, drink that.

74) Against strokes it is good to roast salt and put that on, or to put on a mustard bandage for 15 minutes. Against burns, use egg oil, made from 6 eggs. Whey is good for weak children. Wash the limbs with it.

72) Use this to induce labor, when the contractions are 15 or more minutes apart, use regulating powder, put a pinch in a cup of coffee and drink that.

75) Kastig's [brand name] regulating powder is good to regulate the [menstrual] bleeding. 76) Against a big navel, take an onion when the moon is decreasing and, while saying the 3 highest names, press the onion into the navel. Then bury it towards sunrise [East].

76) To ease defecation, it is good to make an enema of water every morning and every evening, and to sit 15 minutes on the toilet, then it will work.

77) Against rashes, take sweet cream and mix it with powder. Put that on.

78) It is good to use [Bohrfahne](23) against hair worms. Burn it, then mix the ashes with sweet cream and put it on.

79) Mix [Duwagesch] and mother milk and give that to a newlyborn child, that is good against intestinal gout.

80) Press against the anus with the naked heel. For belly aches of little children it is good to mix tree oil with Hoffmann's drops(24) and wash the body with that. Against the [Dorrwieg] Against dandruff make a [lemble](25) gasig and rub the head, then comb and wash.

81) In the morning, you must say "Good evening, dorweg", and in the evening "Good morning, dorweg, you are pork and no human flesh, I forbid you to eat the human flesh. Run the back of a knife around it three times and spit on it. +++ amen.

82) To further hair growth, it is good to use alcohol and white onion.

83) Alcohol bath for weak people. Add alcohol to hot water and put the feet in, up to the knees. 84) Raw figs are good against the black pox.

85) Against Rheumatism, carry a raw potato in your pocket, until it has dried up and crumbles. (26)

86) Semolina and eggwhite is good against dorweg. 87) If the period is delayed, smoke juniper berries, or put them in alcohol to make a liqueur, and drink that.

88) To stop bleeding, scrape copper or silver and eat that. (27)

89) Mutterbleser [an herb] is good against mother [abdominal] pains. Make a tea from that and drink it, it is also good to mix pumpkin stems, rosehip and [isop] and boil that together and drink that as tea.

90) Against a swollen uterus: "You shan't swell anymore, and shall shrink, and not hurt anymore +++ amen. Rocky Mountain Hollisters [lapsierten] Stomach Kidney and liver tea.

91) Against ear aches, mix boiling water and alcohol and drop that into the ears. Use cotton to plug the ear up.

92) Wild fire(28) [...] God, make that it becomes less and stroke yourself with your right thumb, so that you have your flesh in better control +++ amen.

93) Against epilepsy: take a young toad(29) and brown it, until it is a powder, and take it regularly with water.

94) Against [bed] worms, it is good to grind up a dead tapeworm and eat that, that rids you of it.

95) Tourniquate the legs above the knee against post-natal contractions.

96) Against head stroke it is good to put cotton, drenched in camphor liquor into the ears. \*For an open chest, it is good to mix egg yolk, tree oil and white flour.

96) If you want to lift the mother in a woman, take 1 spoon [fur] and camomille and boil it into a salve. Then make one with vermouth, lard, rye flour, 3 eggs, pepper and bone oil, then one with hops and sweet cream. Keep it potent by keeping it warm. Boil flax, scoop it on a cloth and put it on. A steam-bat and a foot bath, repeat that a few times, than go to bed.

97) Against stroke and rheumatism, use an ant bath in an anthill(30). \*Against swollen limbs, take an egg white and beef lard, beat it together and grease the sick person up with it. Then take a piece of iron, heat it well, take good vinegar and let it run over the iron, so that the sick person is steamed in it well. Then let him go to bed. [...] flour to [...] you can also use juniper berries and [cavonium] and [...] is good.

98) For a fallen uvula, take [Ochsenbraus], make a tea from the blood and gargle with that.

99) "Tumor and Red Murrain shall disappear, like clouds in the sky." +++ amen.

100) Against magic enchantments: "That God may keep me, and his dear mother Mary, I don't know what is happening to me, help me dear Jesus Christ, and all holy children, which are with God in Heaven, in the eternal piece and have spotted the two evil eyes, so three good eyes are watching over you now, the first is God the father, the other is . . .

Footnotes:

1 Katharina Scheuffele, born 12 Aug 1856 in Bergdorf, Glueckstal, South Russia, died 22 May 1942 in Mercer area, McLean, ND.

2 The three crosses and "amen" or "a." occur after almost every incantation. I suppose they indicate that the speaker is supposed to cross him/herself and say "amen".

3 Possibly Migraine

4 "Brei" is actually porridge, but probably refers to some sort of secretion.

5 "Drottenkopf" is a vague term for an evil being, but is used for "nightmare." Being personified like such, it was thought to be effective to keep the nightmare busy until daybreak.

6 From "Schuss" = shot, sharp pain, cramp, and blader = bladder, Another interpretation would be Swabian "blader"= blister.

7 The shingles are called "Rose" in Germany

8 Prescribing Castor Oil against dysentery seems odd, this may be an author's error.

9 The text refers to "Mutter" whenever the female genitals are referred to, especially the uterus, which is, in German, "Gebaermutter"

10 Smoking in the sense of an inhalation therapy. The ingredients would be burned, the smoke inhaled.

11 Menstrual period

12 An officinal herb

13 An officinal herb

14 Possibly an herb

15 Possibly heat rushes

16 It is not apparent how these names are related to the "waters of the whole world" They may be crippled names of biblical terms: Zisohn = Zion, Hiddekkel = Hesekeiel (Hesekiah) and Ihrath = Ischarioth

17 Presumably the residue water after cheesmaking 18 Water in which the blacksmith cools the hot metal.

19 a iota is an old apothecary weight measure

20 i.e. rabbit feces.

21 "Gesungen" is the past tense of "singen" = "to sing". This doesn't make sense, so singing possibly had an additional, other meaning at the time.

22 An herb

23 "Bohrfahne" may mean the shavings from drilling wood or metal

24 Brand name of a 19th century preparation

25 On first sight, this word reads "lemble", which would be "little lamp", but it could also mean "bemble", meaning a porridge-like substance. In that case, it could mean to foam up a porridge-like matter. There is no indication of what the porridge is composed, though.

26 My grandfather (born 1902) used to carry a few chestnuts against rheumatism. I used to collect bags full for him. when they were dry, he would throw them out and replace them with fresh ones.

27 Old farmers in my area of origin would scrape some gold off the coins on their watch-chains and eat that against all sorts of ailments.

28 This may actually be "bad temper"

29 "Krab" in swabian may refer to a crab as well as to a toad. The latter is more likely, as Swabia is quite a distance from the sea.

30 It is commonly known that ant acid is easing rheumatic pain. My grandmother puts her handkerchief on any ant hill she happens by. The ants soak it in their acid, then the handkerchief is rubbed on the sore joints.