

# [Medicine from the Essence of Spruce] Captain Ball

**Date:** 1797/02/07

Contributors

Contributor Role

Other

Contributor Name

Captain Ball

Contributor Role

Other

Contributor Name

Mr. Bean, Purser of the Ship Argonaut

Publication Format

Print

Type

Medicine

Symptoms

food poisoning

fever

Ingredients

spruce essence

Places

Halifax

Nova Scotia

**Source:** Royal Gazette and the Nova Scotia Advertiser.

**Institution:** Nova Scotia Archives | **Source Origin:** Nova Scotia Newspapers on Microfilm | **Reference:**

Consult the Nova Scotia Archives' "Nova Scotia Newspapers on Microfilm" list (Royal Gazette) for a complete account of microfilm reels for this paper. EMMR includes recipes from Microfilm Reels 8162, 8163, 8165, and 8167.

Description

Extracts from letters by two naval officers describing the successful use of spruce essence as a remedy for food poisoning and fever. Vol. 8 No. 445, Microfilm Reel 8167.

Transcription

HALIFAX, Jan. 26.

*Extract from Capt. Ball's Letter.*

“A greater proportion of Officers both in the army and navy have died than privates, or sailors, which I ascribe to their eating too much putrescent food. The Physician General told me last week that this fever had baffled the skill of all the faculty, both English and French; but a master of transport had found out a medicine in the Essence of Spruce which had cured a great many people. It has succeeded with all men lately attacked: and it is equally well spoken of in the other ships. We only began trying it for three days before we failed. The proportion is three table spoonfulls of Essence to a quart of warm water; When cool it maybe taken in small tumblers, one every half hour or an hours interval; less maydo for a week constitution. Three tumblers have proved a cure. It some times acts as purgative, with some people it has not any sensible effect but the symptoms gradually going away. I had caught the fever, and of taking three tumblers of this medicine the symptoms went away without any sensible operation.”

I have frequently felt the putrid Effluvium in my throat, which causes this melancholy fever soon after I inhaled it, which got of by washing my mouth, and drinking plentifully of light liquors. It has the taste of Tobacco

*Extract of a letter from Mr. M. Bean, Purser of His Majesty's Ship Argonaut.*

“Emetics and bleeding have been in general unsuccessful. The former weakens the stomach so much that it refuses to retain any thing afterwards, and bleeding rather accelerates the progress of the disease. We have lately found that the Essence of spruce has been efficacious and has relieved several in the course of four or five hours.

The mixture is three table spoonfulls of Essence dissolved in a quart bottle of hot water, and taken cold about a tumbler full every hour till three tumblers have been taken, keeping the patient in open air and walking if he is able; but when the fever is entirely gone off the patient may go below. When the spruce begins to purge which it general does more or less, the taking should be discontinued.

Medicine from the Essence of Spruce recipe from Early Modern Maritime Recipes:

<https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/recipes/37>