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How Aspirin Entered Our Medicine Cabinet

 Springer

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*for Teri, who suggested it, and for Cory,
in memorium*

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Abstract

This brief traces the story of one of our most common medicines—*aspirin*. On a journey involving diverse characters, shady business deals, innovative advertising, and good old-fashioned luck, Rooney and Campbell describe how *aspirin* was developed and marketed on a global scale. Starting at the beginning of the twentieth century, the authors explain the use of *aspirin* during the First World War, the development of competition drugs such as *acetaminophen* after the Second World War, and the application of *aspirin* to heart disease through the present. On a broader level, Rooney and Campbell show that the development of America's modern pharmaceuticals was a complex weaving of chemistry and mass culture. They argue that *aspirin*'s story provides a way to understand the application of complex chemical formulas into medical results. This brief is of interest to historians of chemistry and medicine as well as the general educated reader.

Keywords *Aspirin, history of* • *Bayer, history of* • *Medical history* • *Heart attacks/stroke* • *Headache* • *Drugs, history of* • *Great influenza* • *Advertising* • *Mass culture* • *Medicine*