



The History of Medicine: A Very Short Introduction

By William Bynum



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Against the backdrop of unprecedented concern for the future of health care, this Very Short Introduction surveys the history of medicine from classical times, through the scholastic medieval tradition and the Enlightenment to the present day. Taking a thematic rather than strictly chronological approach, W.F. Bynum, explores the key turning points in the history of Western medicine-such as the first surgical procedures, the advent of hospitals, the introduction of anesthesia, X-Rays, vaccinations, and many other innovations, as well as the rise of experimental medicine. The book also explores Western medicine's encounters with Chinese and Indian medicine, as well as nontraditional treatments such as homeopathy, chiropractic, and other alternative medicines. Covering a vast amount of information, this Very Short Introduction sheds new light on medicine's past, while at the same time engaging with contemporary issues, discoveries, and controversies, such as the spiraling costs of health care, lack of health insurance for millions, breakthrough treatments, and much more. For readers who wish to understand the how we have arrived at our current state of medical practice and knowledge, this book is essential reading.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

W. F. Bynum is Professor Emeritus of the history of medicine at the Wellcome Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London. He is the author of *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century* and the *Oxford Dictionary of Scientific Quotations* (1994). He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London and of Edinburgh.

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