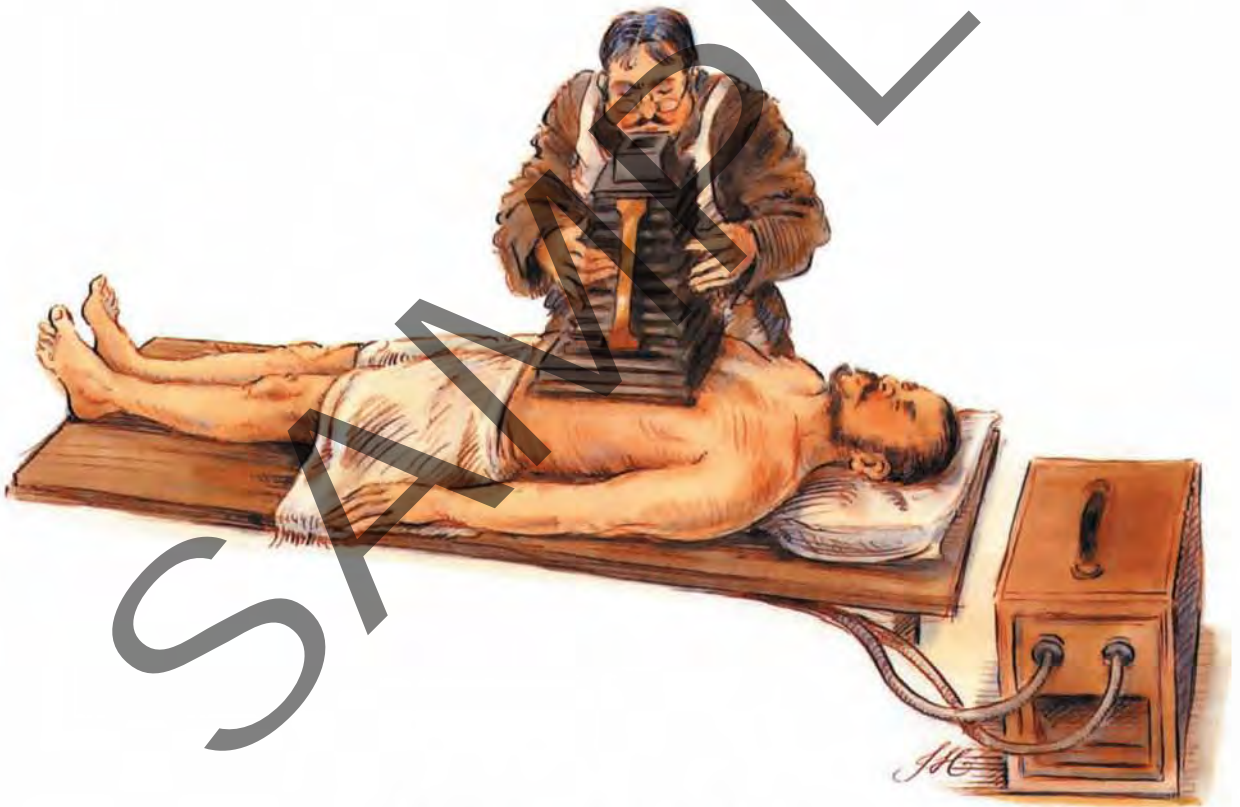


Lifesavers



Discoveries in
Medicine



Jacqueline Dineen

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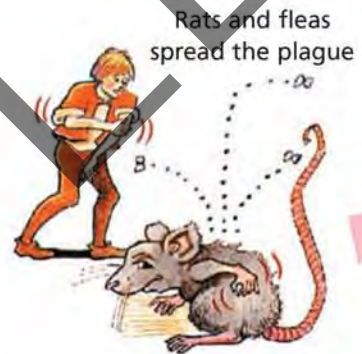


Introduction

Since the earliest times, women and men have struggled to cure diseases and physical ailments. The first “medicines” were very simple, but as people began to learn more about the human body, they discovered and developed amazing new cures and treatments. The pioneering work of these people means that today we live longer, healthier lives than ever before.

Saving Lives

The journey of discovery has been a long and exciting one. As people began to understand more about how the human body worked, they were able to study what happens when a person gets sick. They explored how the body can be weakened by **bacteria** and **viruses**, how bones can be fractured in different ways, and how **organs** (such as the heart, lungs, and kidneys) can become so diseased that they no longer do the job they were designed to do.



Rats and fleas spread the plague



Amputation without painkillers



Herbal medicine



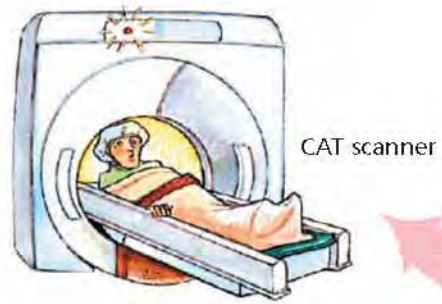
Early brain surgery



The snake – symbol of medicine

Once people understood more about the body, they were able to invent new equipment and develop new medical techniques. Not only could more diseases and injuries be treated, but patients were cared for in more effective ways that gave them a better chance for recovery.

However, this path of progress was sometimes dangerous. Some early pioneers of new procedures and treatments put their own lives at risk by experimenting on themselves. Others put themselves in danger unknowingly, and died early as a consequence. Marie Curie, for example, spent years studying **radioactivity**, but died from its harmful effects. *See Radioactivity, p. 22* ➔



Other pioneers became disheartened, particularly when their new ideas generated criticism. Andrea Vesalius, for instance, burned all his unpublished works and gave up teaching when his new book on **anatomy** was ridiculed. *See Vesalius, p. 15* ➔



Circulation of the blood

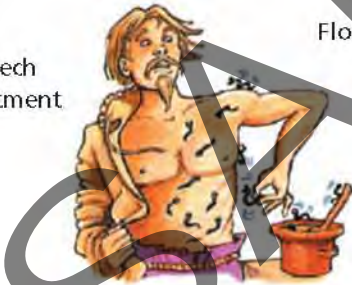


Florence Nightingale and nursing



Organ transplants

Leech treatment



Developing the smallpox vaccine

All the men and women featured in this book were lifesavers. It is difficult to calculate exactly how many lives have been saved by their work, but it is certainly millions worldwide. Whenever you take medicine, go to the doctor, or have an operation or a shot, you are benefiting from the extraordinary contributions of these people.