

## 17<sup>th</sup> Century Medical Lettuce Poultice



### Ingredients and Equipment:

Lettuce

Rosewater

Milk

Pestle and mortar

Cloth strip

### Method:

In the pestle and mortar grind the lettuce, particularly the stalks, until you have some lettuce juice. Add a little rose water and some milk. Dip your cloth into the liquid and place on your forehead.

This remedy has been adapted from one in John Partridge's *The Widowes Treasure* (1588). A poultice was a strip of cloth used like a plaster or bandage. Homemade remedies, made of various kitchen ingredients and herbs, would be spread onto the cloth and applied to the affected area of the body. We believe this sleep aid would work due to the cooling nature of the liquid. The Tudors and Stuarts thought that when they slept, vapours rising from the stomach would cool the brain, bringing sleep and refreshing them when they woke. The cold poultice would encourage this. The poultice involved ingredients that we know to be sleepy today. Roses were also a common remedy for headaches and were said to cheer people up, relieving anxieties before bedtime. Partridge's instructions included the addition of flax seed and nutmeg, both similarly recognised as sleepy ingredients today.

