

Welcome to

The Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy



The history of pharmacy

For centuries, the pharmacy was the hub of the entire pharmaceutical process.

In Denmark, the pharmacy service developed successively from the middle of the 16th century. Pharmacies were regulated by the king and under obligation to procure, prepare, store, and distribute medicines in order to heal, mitigate or prevent disease in the population. Pharmacists also traditionally combined pharmaceutical service with applied art in the furnishing of their pharmacies, and in the design of jars, bottles, mortars, and scales. The professional fitting-out and decoration of the pharmacies together with the characteristic smell of the medicaments provided a special atmosphere.

During the 20th century, pharmaceutical companies gradually assumed the task of providing and manufacturing medicines, and the distinctive character of the pharmacies changed. Today pharmacies are an integrated part of the health



services. Advising people about the safe use of medicines, general health care and prevention is now supplementary to the well-known dispensing function of the pharmacist.

The establishment of a pharmaceutical industry in the late 19th century and its expansion in the 20th century was due mainly to the invention of the tablet as a medicine form. Mass production of medicines became possible thanks to the tablet machine and other pharmaceutical equipment. Continuous development produced new medicines that were often stronger and had more specific effects than in the past.

The Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy

Visitors to the Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy at Pharmakon in Hillerød have an opportunity to gain real insight into the fascinating history of pharmacy.

The collection illustrates the operation of the pharmacies and the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the history of medicines in Denmark over the past 100 years.

The collection is divided into three sections: pharmacy, tablet manufacture and a medicine exhibition.

The pharmacy section starts with an exhibition of ornamental objects from Danish pharmacies, including signs, symbols, jars, bottles, mortars, scales, copper apparatus, and other pharmaceutical antiquities. Then follow exhibitions of tools, devices, and machines used for the craftsman like manufacture of medicines in the pharmacies, as well as displays of glasses, bottles, boxes, labels, stamps, and prescription envelopes used in connection with dispensing of medicines. The pharmacy section also features a collection of pharmaceutical books and documents.

The tablet manufacture section displays tablet machines and other apparatus used in connection with tablet production in Danish pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies. This section illustrates the development of tablet manufacture from craft to industry.

The medicine exhibition displays a selection of medicines from Danish pharmacies as well as pharmaceuticals from Danish and foreign industrial companies to illustrate the development of drugs from low- to high-technological products.



A selection of apparatus and machines in the collection is restored to working condition, which enables us to demonstrate the manufacture of medicines to visitors.

The Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy

The Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy was established on 1 January 2002 as a united framework for the activities of the history of pharmacy in Denmark.

The object of the foundation is

- to carry out museum work to illustrate the history of pharmacy in Denmark, and,
- to promote research into the history of pharmacy in Denmark and to spread knowledge of the field, in collaboration with the Danish Society for the History of Pharmacy.

The foundation is headed by a 10-member board representing the organizations, institutions, and authorities in the field of drugs in Denmark.

The Danish Foundation of the History of Pharmacy owns the Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy, where it carries out the work connected to the museum and other activities.

The foundation also owns a large collection of antique pharmacy equipment and furniture, most of it displayed in the pharmacies to which it belongs and in public museums all over the country.



Further information

Opening hours in The Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy Tuesdays 13 – 16. The collection is closed in January, July and during the Christmas holidays.

Guided tours can be arranged by contacting manager Mette Katrine Jensen.

Refreshments and meals can be provided to visitors by prearrangement.

The Danish Collection of the History of Pharmacy
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