

The Oath of Hippocrates

"I swear by Apollo, the Physician, and Asclepius and Health and All-Heal and All the Gods and Goddesses that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath and Stipulation:

"To reckon him who taught me this art equally dear to me as my parents, to share my substance with him and relieve his necessities if required: to regard his offspring as on the same footing with my own brothers, and to teach them this art if they should wish to learn it without fee or stipulation, and that by precept lecture and every other mode of instruction. I will impart knowledge of the art to my own sons and to those of my teachers, and to disciples bound by a stipulation and oath, according to the law of medicine, but to none others. "I will follow that method of treatment which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; furthermore, I will not give to a woman an instrument to produce abortion."

"With purity and with holiness I will pass my life and practice my art. I will not cut a person who is suffering with a stone, but will leave this to be done by practitioners of this work. Into whatever houses I enter I will go into them for the benefit of the sick and will abstain from every voluntary act of mischief and corruption, and further from the seduction of females or males, bond or free."

"Whatever in connection with my professional practice, or not in connection with it, I may see or hear in the lives of men which ought not to be spoken abroad, I will not divulge, as reckoning that all such should be kept secret."

"While I continue to keep this oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and the practice of the art, respected by all men at all times but should I trespass and violate this oath, may the reverse be my lot." All doctors used to swear this oath when they were licensed to practice medicine. But then two sentences were quietly dropped: "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel, and in like manner, I will not give a woman a pessary to produce abortion."