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### Flu Files Assignment Part II

I chose to analyze a Vaseline advertisement printed in the Boston Daily Globe on October 19th, 1918 to examine how corporations were capitalizing on the Spanish Flu to push their products. This is the first advertisement on page 7 of this issue from a total of 5 Vaseline advertisements within the Boston Daily Globe in a 3-week span between October and November 1918. According to Mass Moments, the Spanish Flu Epidemic began that August in Boston through two sailors while the media also hesitated in realizing the severity of this disease (Mass Humanities). I believe these back-to-back advertisements are in response to the late action toward influenza with Vaseline marketing off of fear and heightened awareness.

The advertisement begins with a call to action “Help Fight the Epidemic” for consumers to join the collective effort to eradicate influenza. Below is a notice from the Surgeon General on the symptoms as well as how military personnel were being treated with liquid vaseline and eucalyptol. Vaseline’s frames this notice from a military standpoint with the title being “General Blue Tells How to Cure “Spanish” Grip” in correlation to the “fight” of the advertisement’s headline. Through the military’s use of liquid vaseline and eucalyptol, Vaseline sees the opportunity to allow military validation to market their Vaseline petroleum jelly with eucalyptol. Immediately following the notice is “Let everyone take precautions” to invite everyday consumers the privilege in influenza prevention. They advise customers to line their noses with Vaseline every night and morning to lessen the risk of disease while highlighting that their petroleum jelly contains no dangerous ingredients.

Additionally, this advertisement reflects onto today through COVID-19 with a rising trend of natural alternatives, specifically essential oils. The ingredient eucalyptol is the primary component of eucalyptus essential oil, known for its cooling properties. Although both Vaseline and today's herbal medicine users center their arguments on the accessibility and transparency of medicine, it has been found that these suggestions are dangerous. Dr. Adrian Divittorio, a pulmonologist, debunked this seemingly century-old myth this June: "Putting lubricants, vaseline, essential oils on the tip of the nose or nostrils does not impede the entrance of organisms, viruses, the coronavirus in particular. If anything it can increase the work of breathing" (Lombard). This speaks to the advancement of medicine as there are more over-the-counter options beyond Vaseline now in 2020; however, could Vaseline be complicit in this harmful advice? It's uncertain that consumers became much more susceptible to the Spanish Flu through this advice, but that argument is limited to the knowledge of that time. However, those within the age of COVID-19 soliciting damaging advice are much more responsible.

### Works Cited

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Lombard, Cherish. "COVID-19 question of the day: "Can using vaseline prevent coronavirus?"

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# Help Fight the Epidemic

## General Blue Tells How to Cure "Spanish" Grip

*Spanish influenza and what to do for it are described by Surgeon-General Rupert Blue of the Public Health Service as follows:*

"The disease is characterized by sudden onset. People are stricken in the street, in factories, shipyards, offices or elsewhere.

"First there is a chill, then fever, with temperature from 101 to 103; headache, backache, reddening and running of the eyes, pains and aches all over the body and general prostration.

"Persons so attacked should go home and to bed and call a doctor immediately.

"Treatment consists principally of rest in bed, fresh air, abundant food, with Dover's powders for relief of pain. Every case with fever should be regarded as serious and kept in bed at least until temperature becomes normal."

The army doctors at Camp Devens are using dichloramine-T, in solution with eucalyptol and liquid vaseline, or combined with chlorocane, in prophylactic treatment as a precaution against Spanish influenza with good results.

But this remedy is for doctors only. No layman should attempt its use, as the ingredients are dangerous if used in improper proportions.

Let everyone take precautions to prevent the spread of Spanish Influenza (or the grip). This disease, carried by germs, attacks you through the air you breathe.

# Vaseline

Reg U. S. Pat. Off.

# Eucalyptol

Petroleum Jelly

"Vaseline" Eucalyptol contains no dangerous ingredients of any kind.

Snuffed into the nostrils, it protects the delicate membrane with an antiseptic film—no irritation. Its action is disinfecting, cleansing.

If you breathe through your nose, as you should, "Vaseline" Eucalyptol lessens the risk of this dread infection. Use it every night and morning.

At all druggists.

CHESEBROUGH MANUFACTURING CO.  
(Consolidated)

17 State St.

New York

