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German Inventors

What do people ask for when they are in pain? The answer is aspirin. It is hard to imagine what life would be like without it. Billions of these pills are produced each year and they can be bought at basically any store around the world. However, many people do not know the person who invented it. German chemist Felix Hoffmann was responsible for developing this medicine.

Felix Hoffman was born in Ludwigsburg, Germany in 1868. He studied the fields of pharmacy and chemistry and graduated from the University of Munich in 1891. A few years later, he worked for Bayer and Company as a chemist, where he eventually made his monumental discovery. Motivated by wanting to help his father when he was ill, he was trying to find a way to cure his pain. In 1897, his experiments led him to combine salicylic acid with acetic acid to make a stable form of the medicine aspirin. The word “aspirin” comes from the “a” in “acetyl” and the “spirin” from Spirea, the name of the shrubs that are the source of salicylic acid. Once people heard of this new solution to cure pain, fevers, and more, the term “aspirin” became a household name.

This invention changed the world for the better. Research shows that taking aspirin daily can reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke. Some studies even say it can help prevent some forms of cancer. Surprisingly, rubbing the tablet and water over a mosquito bite or a bee sting can help with the inflammation. In addition, a paste can be made from several pills and water to apply to a person’s face to help improve skin tone. Because of this magical medicine and all its uses, Felix Hoffmann can be called one of the greatest German inventors.