

Tonalgia, “the Most Satisfactory Local Anesthetic”



Alarmed by the rising frequency of reported anesthetic accidents in the 1890s, American dentists began exploring ways to avoid using nitrous oxide, ether, or chloroform on their patients. Among a crowd of proprietary local anesthetics marketed to these professionals was Tonalgia. The floral trade card (*above*) touted Tonalgia as “the most satisfactory local anesthetic ever used.” Tonalgia’s active ingredient was a uniquely vasoconstricting local anesthetic ... named cocaine. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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