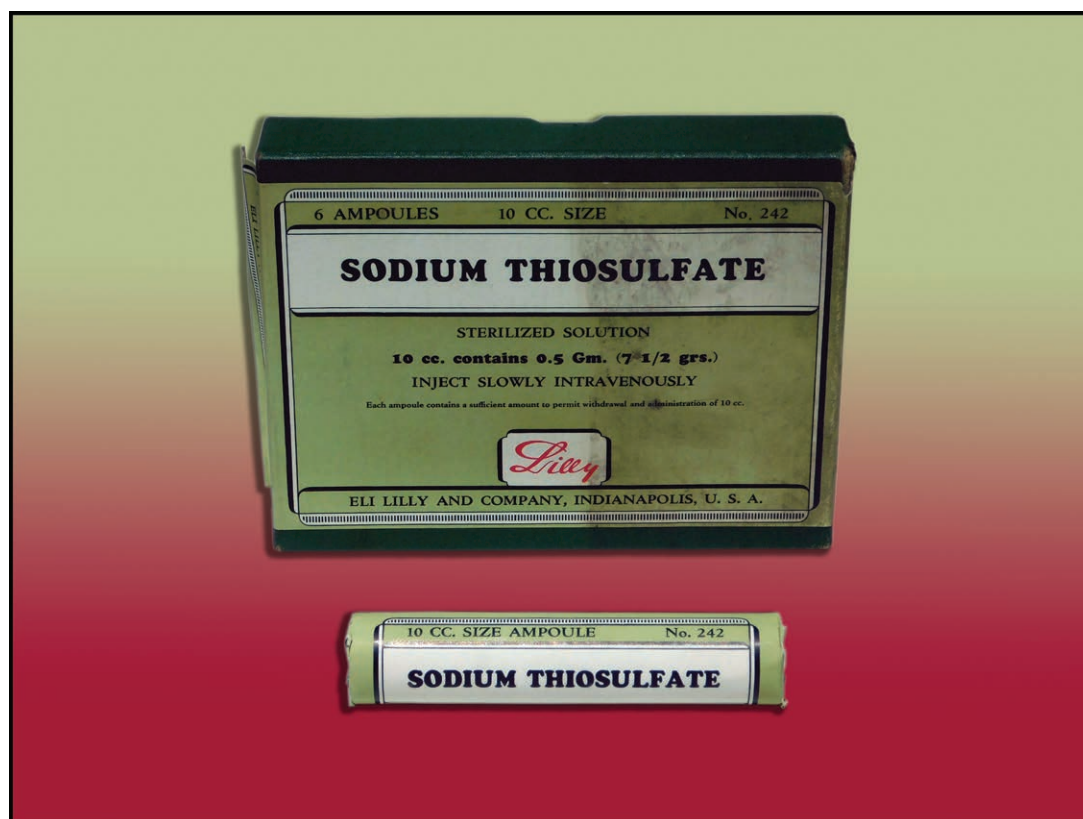


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

From Fixing Photos to Fixing Cyanide Poisoning: Herschel's “Hypo” or Sodium Thiosulfate



In 1819, a soon-to-be-knighted John Herschel (1792 to 1871) discovered that hyposulfite of soda could “fix” or make photographic images permanent by dissolving away unexposed and otherwise insoluble silver salts. This British genius soon coined terms for his astronomical or botanical images as “negatives” or “positives” and for the art as “photography.” Even after it was renamed sodium thiosulfate, hyposulfite of soda retained photographers’ nickname for it: “hypo.” An antidote for cyanide poisoning, sodium thiosulfate was supplied in ampoules to physicians by Eli Lilly (*above*) and other pharmaceutical firms. Eventually, an editor-in-chief of ANESTHESIOLOGY, Dr. John Michenfelder, would help popularize the antidotal availability of sodium thiosulfate for treating cyanide toxicity resulting from overdoses of antihypertensive infusions of sodium nitroprusside. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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