

## Medicine topic 1b knowledge organiser: Key question: How did people treat and prevent illness in the Middle Ages? (1250-1500)

### Lesson 6: Traditional approaches to treatment

Key words for this lesson:

Phlebotomy: Bleeding patients as they believed they had too much blood.

Purging: Giving the patient something horrible to make them sick.

Herbal remedies: Herbs that people sniffed, ate/drank or bathed in.

Patients would bleed themselves by opening a vein using a lancet, using a bleeding cup or leeches. They would perform enemas or make themselves vomit. Herbal remedies included theriaca, which contained 70 ingredients and traditional herbs like mint and aloe. Materia Medica gave advice as to the healing powers of plants.

### Lesson 7: How did they prevent illness in the Middle Ages?

Key words for this lesson:

Stewes: Public baths

Regimen Sanitatis: Instructions about how to keep clean

Prevention: Stopping something in the first place

The rich would visit stewes to keep clean and the poor would swim in rivers and lakes. Because they believed in miasma, they said to keep their houses smelling clean with lavender. The church said to avoid sin to prevent illness. Regimen Sanitatis advice included good diet, exercise and good sleep/ rest. People believed humours were produced in digestion so a good diet was important.



### Lesson 8 Medieval Medics

Apothecaries: Mixed medicines and herbal remedies

Barber surgeons: Used sharp instruments to cut hair so also did minor surgery and bleedings.

Physician: The name used for doctors in the Medieval period.

A physician would be trained using the works of Galen and Hippocrates at university. They would diagnose illness. Only the rich could afford to visit them. The physician may send you for minor surgery like blood letting. This would be performed by a barber surgeon. A physician may also send people to an apothecary for treatment. Apothecaries could prescribe all sorts of remedies, including poison.

Treatment was often performed in the home by a wise woman. She would use family remedies and herbs like marigolds and clover from her garden to treat illness.

### Lesson 9: Was hospital care rare in the Middle Ages?

Key words for this lesson:

Hospitality: Hosting/ providing somewhere to stay

Endowment: People left money in their wills to set up a hospital

Penance: Punishing yourself to show you were sorry for sins

The church provided lots of the basic medical care. Monks and nuns offered care rather than actually treating patients. They would turn some contagious and pregnant people away. Patients had to share beds. There were no physicians. People could pray and were given bedding and food. Church hospitals were better as places to recover from rather than treat illness.



### Lesson 10: How did people respond to the Black Death?

Key words for this lesson:

Buboes: The black spots that people got that made people call it the Black Death

Flagellants: People who whipped themselves to punish themselves

Astrology: People used star charts and planet positions to suggest treatments.

Quarantine: Separating the sick from the healthy

A third of England's population died and people believed it was caused by the alignment of the planets and a punishment from God. Physicians tried bleeding, purging and sweet smelling herbs like aloe. Praying to God, fasting and pilgrimages were also encouraged. The government attempted a 40 day quarantine but most rich people moved around and the church met as usual.