

Knowledge organiser

Medieval Medicine 1250-1500.

The Four Humours. Basic: Learn the names of each of the 'Four Humours'

Extra challenge: Learn the other qualities/elements/temperaments that are associated with each.

T he 4 Elements	F ire	A ir	W ater	E arth
P Primary Qualities	H ot & dry	H ot & moist	C old & moist	C old & dry
T he Humours	Y ellow Bile	B lood	P hlegm	B lack Bile
T he Temperaments	C holeric	S anguine	P hlegmatic	M elancholic

Word	Definition
1. Catholic	Religion of England until the Tudor Reformation. Led by the Pope in Rome. Very powerful and owned lots of land, e.g. monasteries.
2. Tithe	A tax that everyone had to pay to the Church.
3. Sin	People believed this built up in your soul and determined how long you spent in purgatory. You could remove it by going on pilgrimages, confessing to a priest etc.
4. Purgatory	A kind of 'waiting room' people believed you went to after death, where your sins would be burned away. You could lessen your time there by removing sin.
5. Leprosy	A common disease in medieval Europe that resulted in the flesh rotting away.
6. Astrology	The belief that the stars influence life on Earth (e.g. horoscopes today are astrology)
7. Supernatural	For something to have an explanation that isn't 'natural' – e.g. ghosts, God, astrology etc.
8. Four humours	A theory developed by the ancient medical thinkers Hippocrates and Galen. The belief was that there were four humours – black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood. They believed that illness occurred when these became out of balance – e.g. too much blood, which could be helped by blood letting. These ideas dominated medical thinking until the Renaissance started after 1500.
9. Phlegm	One of the four humours – related to 'cold' and 'moist', as people coughed up phlegm when they had colds.

10. Physician	A medieval doctor, trained in the ideas of the time (e.g. Four Humours).
11. Galen	Medical thinker from Ancient Rome. Built upon ideas of Hippocrates, e.g. Four Humours. Remained main source of medical ideas until the 16 th century and beyond.
12. Hippocrates	Medical thinker from time of Ancient Greece. Hugely influential on medieval Europe's thinking about medicine. Ideas carried on by Galen, e.g. Four Humours. Doctors today still take a 'Hippocratic oath' in which they swear to do no harm.
13. Theory of Opposites	Part of the Four Humours. Physicians believed you could treat someone by identifying the problem (e.g. too much phlegm/a cold) and solving it by applying the opposite (eat some hot peppers!)
14. Classical	Refers to the period of Ancient Greece and Rome, which was hugely influential on European medical ideas for many hundreds of years.
15. Miasma	The belief that bad air caused disease.
16. Urine	Physicians might look at, smell and taste a person's urine to diagnose them, as part of the 'Four Humours'.
17.	
18. Printing press	First developed by Gutenberg in 1440, and spread across Europe thereafter. This made it much easier to copy and spread new medical ideas – before, all books had to be copied out by hand so they were very rare and expensive.
19. Pilgrimages	A religious journey, e.g. to a saint's relic. To remove sin.
20. Mass	A ritual of the Catholic church.
21. Fasting	Avoiding food. Breakfast literally means to 'break your fast' after sleeping!
22. Relics	A holy religious item that people believed had special powers – e.g. a piece of the cross Christ died on.
23. Amulets	An object with special or lucky powers – e.g. a rabbit's food.
24. Astrology	The study of the stars. Medieval people believed the moon and stars influence disease on earth.
25. Phlebotomy	The practice of taking blood from a patient to examine.
26. Blood letting	A common treatment in medieval England, as part of the 'Four Humours'. Patients would be bled by the application of a warmed cup or leeches.
27. Leeches	Leeches were used by medieval physicians to draw blood.
28. Cupping	A warm cup applied to a cut to make a vacuum and draw out blood from a patient.
29. Purging	Patients were sometimes given remedies to 'flush' their system out by encouraging vomiting and diarrhoea.
30. Emetic	An agent given to 'purge' an individual.
31. Enema	A tube inserted into a patient's anus, and used to flush their colon.
32. Laxatives	An agent used to encourage someone to go to the toilet (number two!)
33. Theriaca	A type of herbal antidote developed to cure specific ailments.
34. Bathing	'Cleanliness is next to godliness' – people believed staying clean was an important element of good health.

35. Regimen sanitatis	A programme of cleanliness designed by medieval physicians to help restore the Four Humours.
36. Oxford/Cambridge	The only universities in medieval England, they trained priests and physicians with a heavy emphasis on the role of God and the four Humours.
37. Apothecaries	A kind of medieval chemist, who would be able to supply people with remedies.
38. Barber surgeons	Barbers would often also perform basic surgical procedures, hence the barber pole representing blood and bandages. Surgery was not regarded as a high status profession, and was very risky in medieval times.
39. Hospitals	Medieval hospitals did not serve the same purpose as hospitals today – ill people were discouraged as it was feared they would spread disease. Hospitals were usually run by the Church, often as part of a monastery (e.g. Ely cathedral). They served as a rest home for people who could no longer look after themselves, e.g. the old.
40. Endowments	Donations made to the Church – e.g. to set up a hospital.
41. Black Death	Disease that spread through Europe in 1348, killing millions. It is now thought to have been spread by a bacillus in rat fleas, although this was not understood at the time.

Key dates

1. **43-410 AD** – Romans rule Britain
2. **410-1066** – Anglo-Saxon England.. Britain returns to a period of violence and anarchy after Roman rule, much knowledge is forgotten
3. **597 AD** – Traditional date for the arrival of Christianity in Britain.
4. **1066** – Battle of Hastings – Norman conquest begins
5. **1066-1485 AD** – Medieval period
6. **1348 AD** – Black Death
7. **1440** – Printing press invented by Johannes Gutenberg.
8. **1533 AD** – Henry VIII divorces his wife. Start of Reformation, end of Catholic England.