

Knowledge Organiser

Renaissance Medicine c.1500-c.1700

Word	Definition
1. Plague	An infectious disease spread to humans by fleas, rats and mice. The Great Plague of London in 1665 killed around 100,000.
2. Quarantine	When someone with a disease is put into isolation to stop it spreading to other people.
3. Renaissance	A period of reborn interest in the culture of the Greeks and Romans, and a new willingness to challenge ideas and ask questions. Renaissance means “re-birth”.
4. Charles II	King from 1660 to 1685. He fell ill in 1685, and doctors unsuccessfully tried to save his life with treatments such as bloodletting and purging.
5. The Royal Society	A group of people, including King Charles II, who met to discuss science and carry out experiments.
6. Philosophical Transactions	A scientific journal first produced by the Royal Society in 1665, and still published today. It contained letters, experiments and observations carried out by European scientists.
7. Apothecaries	Someone who made and sold medicines, often herbal remedies, like a pharmacist or chemist.
8. Dissection	The cutting up and examination of a body.
9. Thomas Sydenham	A London doctor who made great progress in diagnosing diseases. He took a very practical approach to medicine, stressing that doctors “must go to the bedside” to learn about disease.
10. William Harvey	A doctor who discovered the circulation of blood. He identified that blood was pumped around the body by the heart, and was not made in the liver as Galen had said.
11. Andreas Vesalius	An Italian surgeon who wrote <i>The Fabric of the Human Body</i> in 1543, a book featuring detailed illustrations of the human body. He proved that some of Galen’s ideas were wrong, e.g. the human jaw is made of one bone, not two as Galen had thought.
12. Anatomy	The science of understanding the structure and make-up of the body.
13. Herbal remedy	A medicine made up of a mixture of plants, often containing beneficial ingredients. Many new plants started to appear from the New World around this time.
14. Scrofula	A skin disease known as “The King’s Evil.” Being touched by the King was believed to cure it, because the King was the closest thing to being touched by God.
15. Dysentery	A stomach bug that causes severe diarrhoea.
16. St. Bartholomew’s Hospital	A large hospital in London founded in 1123. It was large enough to treat up to 300 patients by the 1660s.
17. Dissolution of the monasteries	The closure of the monasteries (where the majority of hospitals were located) by Henry VIII in the 1530s, following his split from the Catholic Church and the creation of the Church of England.
18. Quack methods	Methods of treating disease that had no medical or scientific basis, sold by a “quack doctor” who had no medical qualifications.
19. Blood circulation	The way in which blood moves around the body, carried by veins and pumped by the heart.
20. Microscope	Instrument used to view small objects in detail, invented around 1590.

21. Transference	A popular new theory that disease could be removed by transferring it to another object or animal.
22. Medical chemistry	The science of using chemicals to treat disease, rather than relying just on herbal medicines. An example is antimony, which in small doses encourages sweating and therefore cools the body down.
23. Fugitive sheets	Prints of detailed anatomical drawings which were given to medical students.
24. Pest houses	A new type of hospital that catered only for people suffering from a specific plague or pox (traditional hospitals would not admit contagious patients).
25. Syphilis	A violent disease known as the Great Pox. Many remedies were tried but doctors were powerless to treat it.
26. New World	North and South America, an area of the world that Europeans were only aware of from 1492. New remedies started to appear, such as ipecac from Brazil to cure dysentery.