

HEALTH AND MEDICINE



In Tudor Times (1485 - 1603)

LIFE IN TUDOR BRITAIN WAS HARSH

The average life expectancy was just 35-38 years. 30% of children died before their 10th birthday.

DISEASES

Scurvy

Plague

Gout

Smallpox

Influenza

Scrofula

Sweating sickness

BALANCE YOUR HUMOURS

- Humours were the fluids in the human body:
 - Blood hot and wet
 - Phlegm cold and wet
 - Black bile cold and dry
 - Yellow bile hot and dry

- If the Humours were unbalanced you were ill:
 - A dry hacking cough with a fever: too much yellow bile
 - Fever: too much blood
 - Sadness and depression: too much black bile
 - Colds: too much phlegm

HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

There were 5 main types of people who could help you if you were sick:

- ◉ Physicians - for the rich and royals. They had to go to university for 7 years.
- ◉ Barber/surgeons - cut off hair in peace times and cut off limbs in the war.
- ◉ Apothecaries - made potions out of herbs.
- ◉ Monks - like researchers; they studied the effects of different herbs.
- ◉ Herb-, house-, and midwives - used grown herbs to help the sick. People accused many of being witches.

POOR DIETS

- **Although there was a big difference between the diet of the rich and the poor, neither diet was healthy.**
The rich diet lacked fibre and was high in fat and sugars. The poor diet was healthier as it included vegetables and low fat meats such as mutton and chicken, but there was never enough food, causing malnutrition.

TUDOR TOWNS WERE DIRTY

- ◉ There were no bins, no toilets and no street cleaners.
- ◉ There were many animals in the streets
- ◉ Rats carried diseases but the Tudors didn't know that.

HOW TO CURE YOUR ILLNESSES!

- ◉ Magic
 - ◉ Superstition
 - ◉ Herbs
 - ◉ Leeches
 - ◉ Cover up bad smells
 - ◉ Smoke tobacco (!)
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- ◉ Magic and Superstition are closely related.
In an age when so much could not be explained, superstition was still important. Most people could not afford doctors and relied on treatments from the apothecary or a village wise-woman. Folk-remedies were often bizarre. If, for example, you had a headache, the advice was to drink a herbal cure made of lavender, sage, marjoram, roses and rue or to press a hangman's rope to your head. The cure for smallpox was to wrap somebody in a red blanket.
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- ◉ **Doctors also believed that illnesses, like the plague, were passed on through smells.**
These smells, or poisonous 'vapours', were thought to be absorbed through the skin. Ginger or Chervil (a herb that smells of aniseed) was put in scented balls called pomanders that people carried with them to smell.
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- ◉ Plague doctors wore all-over leather protective clothes and put bergamot oil (thought to protect against boils) in the long beaks of their face masks. They sprinkled themselves with vinegar and chewed the sweet herb angelica to fight off infection before visiting their patients.