

Content of GCSE course – Medicine Through time

Key topic	Specification content			
c1250–c1500: Medicine in medieval England <i>Brief overview of the period: medieval England. Continuity in ideas with the ancient world.</i>				
1 Ideas about the cause of disease and illness in the Middle ages	Supernatural and religious explanations of the cause of disease.			
	Rational explanations: the Theory of the Four Humours and the miasma theory; the continuing influence of Hippocrates and Galen.			
2 Approaches to prevention and treatment	Approaches to prevention and treatment and their connection with ideas about disease and illness: religious actions, bloodletting and purging, purifying the air, and the use of remedies.			
	New and traditional approaches to hospital care in the thirteenth century. The role of the physician, apothecary and barber surgeon in treatment and care provided within the community and in hospitals, c1250–1500.			
3 Case study	Dealing with the Black Death, 1348–49; approaches to treatment and attempts to prevent its spread.			
c1500–c1700: The Medical Renaissance in England <i>Brief overview of the period: Britain 1500-1700. The 'Medical Renaissance'.</i>				
1 Ideas about the cause of disease and illness	Continuity and change in explanations of the cause of disease and illness. A scientific approach, including the work of Thomas Sydenham in improving diagnosis. The influence of the printing press and the work of the Royal Society on the transmission of ideas.			
2 Approaches to prevention and treatment	Continuity in approaches to prevention, treatment and care in the community and in hospitals.			
	Change in care and treatment: improvements in medical training and the influence in England of the work of Vesalius.			
3 Case studies	Key individual: William Harvey and the discovery of the circulation of the blood. Dealing with the Great Plague in London, 1665: approaches to treatment and attempts to prevent its spread.			
c1700–c1900: Medicine in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain <i>Brief overview of the period: Britain 1700-1900.</i>				

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1 Ideas about the cause of disease and illness	Continuity and change in explanations of the cause of disease and illness. The influence in Britain of Pasteur's Germ Theory and Koch's work on microbes.			
2 Approaches to prevention and treatment	The extent of change in care and treatment: improvements in hospital care and the influence of Nightingale. The impact of anaesthetics and antiseptics on surgery. New approaches to prevention: the development and use of vaccinations and the Public Health Act 1875.			
3 Case studies	Key individual: Jenner and the development of vaccination. Fighting Cholera in London, 1854; attempts to prevent its spread; the significance of Snow and the Broad Street Pump.			
c1900–present: Medicine in modern Britain <i>Brief overview of the period: Britain 1900 to present.</i>				
1 Ideas about the cause of disease and illness	Advances in understanding the causes of illness and disease: the influence of genetic and lifestyle factors on health. Improvements in diagnosis: the impact of the availability of blood tests, scans and monitors.			
2 Approaches to prevention and treatment	The extent of change in care and treatment. The impact of the NHS and science and technology: improved access to care; advances in medicines, including magic bullets and antibiotics; high-tech medical and surgical treatment in hospitals.			
3 Case studies	Key Individuals: Fleming, Florey and Chain's development of penicillin. The fight against lung cancer in the twenty-first century: the use of science and technology in diagnosis and treatment; government action.			
The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: surgery and treatment	<i>Historic environment</i> The context of the British sector of Western Front and the theatre of war in Flanders and northern France: the Ypres salient, the Somme, Arras and Cambrai. The trench system - its construction and organisation, including frontline and support trenches.			

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	Conditions requiring medical treatment on the Western Front, including the problems of ill health arising from the trench environment. The nature of wounds from rifles and explosives. The problem of shrapnel, wound infection and increased numbers of head injuries. The effects of gas attacks.			
	The work of the RAMC and FANY. The system of transport: stretcher bearers, horse and motor ambulances. The stages of treatment areas: aid post and field ambulance, dressing station, casualty clearing station, base hospital. The underground hospital at Arras.			
	The significance of the Western Front for experiments in surgery and medicine: new techniques in the treatment of wounds and infection, the Thomas splint, the use of mobile x-ray units, the creation of a blood bank for the Battle of Cambrai.			
	The historical context of medicine in the early twentieth century: the understanding of infection and moves towards aseptic surgery; the development of x-rays; blood transfusions and developments in the storage of blood.			