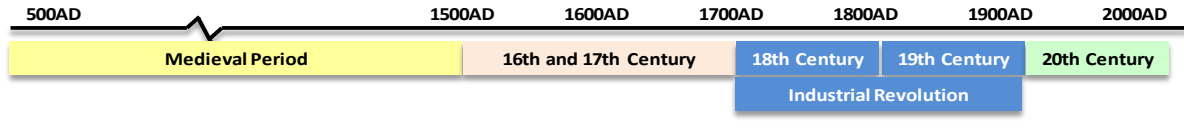


## Knowledge Organiser: Development of Public Health

**Summary:** This section of the medicine topic considers how public health has developed and changed over time; it focuses particularly on who took responsibility for the health of the public. The time periods examined are the medieval period, the 16th and 17th centuries, the 18th and 19th centuries, and the 20th century.



### Medieval Period

#### Summary

The medieval period is one that is characterised by poor public health. This was particularly evident in medieval towns compared to rural areas. Mortality was higher in the towns, people lived closer together and lived alongside their animals and their own filth. However, there were genuine attempts to improve the health of people.

#### Key Knowledge

1	Case Study of Coventry	Coventry is a good example of a medieval town as it was an unhygienic town but it did also make concerted attempts to improve the health of the town. In 1421, the mayor proclaimed that every man had to clean the street in front of his house. Waste collection services are recorded in 1420. It also records designated waste disposal locations outside the city. The council banned disposal of waste in the River Sherbourne and in 1421, it banned all latrines from being built on rivers.
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### 16th and 17th Centuries

#### Summary

The period of the 16th and 17th centuries is still one where the majority of towns were still incredibly dirty and areas where epidemics would often break out. It could be characterised as one that again sees a limited attempt to deal with public health but that would be wrong. The period can also be seen as one where attempts were made to clean up towns but the results were limited.

#### Key Knowledge

2	Tudor Period (1485 to 1603)	The Tudors attempted to improve public health. Henry VIII passed a law preventing slaughterhouses being built in towns. In 1532, he also passed a law allowing councils to impose taxes to build sewers; few places did. In 1547, people were banned from urinating in courtyards of Royal Palaces. Elizabeth I was said to have had a bath at least once a month.
3	Great Fire of London (1666)	After the Great Fire of London in 1666, an act of Parliament was passed insisting that London will be rebuilt in specific ways. Buildings were to be built from stone and streets were made wider. It is argued as a result, London was a healthier place. However, in 1690, laws were passed about the cleaning of streets in London suggesting they needed it still.

### 18th and 19th Centuries

#### Summary

Usually the 18th and 19th century is associated with a period where advancements are made regarding medicine. Yet, regarding Public Health this is a period where it could be argued things deteriorated even further in towns and cities. However, there are some individuals that made concerted attempts to improve the towns in what ways they could.

#### Key Knowledge

4	Impact of Industrialisation	In the nineteenth century, many people moved to the cities to live and to find employment. The impact was that cities such as Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham grew incredibly quickly to house the growing populations.
5	Government's Laissez-Faire Approach	The government followed a policy of laissez-faire meaning it was not the government's responsibility to regulate things like working conditions, houses, transport. As a result, working class housing in industrial cities were poor. The life expectancy of a labourer in Leeds was just 17.
6	Edwin Chadwick	Edwin Chadwick (EC) was a member of the Poor Law Commission, set up as a consequence of the Poor Law Reform Act 1834. He became convinced people were poor because of ill-health rather than idleness and advocated improvements to public health. He published a report called "Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population" in 1842. He became an influential member of the 'Clean Party' which pushed for government action to improve conditions in towns.
7	Public Health Acts (1848 to 1875)	After the Cholera epidemic of 1848, the Public Health Act was passed. This allowed councils to improve conditions in their own towns if they were prepared to pay for it. Further laws would be passed such as Sanitary Act 1866, the Artisans Dwellings Act 1875, and the Public Health Act of 1875. The government had abandoned laissez-faire as they started taking responsibility for public health.
8	Case Study: Sir Titus Salt	Titus Salt owned many factories in Bradford and was a big employer but Bradford was very poor. He tried to help the unemployed but setting up soup kitchens. He is significant when he took his factories out of Bradford and built them in Saltaire but also housing and amenities for his employers in order that they may live happier, healthier lives.
9	Case Study: Birmingham	Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, the government became more involved in public health. Perhaps the best example of this is Birmingham in the 1870s. In 1873, when Joseph Chamberlain became mayor he enacted a policy called 'municipal socialism'. The council borrowed £2 million to buy the gas and waterworks and then used profits to pay for improvements to the city.

### 20th Century

#### Summary

The conditions of the poor would come into sharp focus at the start of the 20th century when not enough volunteers could be found for the army to fight in the Boer War. From this point there is a marked shift in the role of government with regards to public health. The policy of laissez-faire was replaced by an acceptance that it was the role of government to ensure people live healthy lives.

#### Key Knowledge

10	Social Reformers	The reasons why people were poor were finally exposed in the early 20th century by two key philanthropists. Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree studied the poor in London and York, respectively, and found that people were poor due to no fault of their own. Reasons such as unemployment, sickness and old-age put people into poverty.
11	Housing Act (1919)	Following the First World War, the Housing Act of 1919 promised 500,000 homes "Fit for Heroes", but only half were built. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s there were subsidies for building council houses, and acts of parliament demolished slum properties. The rise of the council house had started.
12	New Towns	The next major development in government influencing public health was the creation of new towns. Examples of these include Milton Keynes and Telford. These towns were purposely-built and with better planning of houses, roads and public spaces. The reaction to these has been mixed in that some criticise them for being too false and unorganic in their construction.
13	Campaigns to Improve Health	The emphasis has moved now to prevention with regards to public health and providing information to people on how to live their lives in a healthy way. These government campaigns include fitness and healthy eating campaigns such as "5-a-day".

#### Key Words and Definitions

Mortality	Death
Industrialisation	The development of industry in a country
Laissez-Faire	The policy of leaving things to take their course, without interfering
Poor Law Commission	The Poor Law Commission was an organisation set up to administer poor relief after the passing of the Poor Law in 1834
Idleness	Laziness
Amenities	A desirable or useful feature or facility of a building or place
Socialism	A political and economic policy that advocates that the means of production should be owned by the community as a whole
Philanthropist	A person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, especially by the generous donation of money
Social Reformer	Philanthropists in the early 20th century who advocated social reform to help the poor