

Medieval Public Health

Towns

- Although a few rich people had running water and waste disposal systems , poor people had no access to Public Health.
- The Roman Public Health systems, baths and aqueducts etc. were in ruins for 100's of years.
- The rich were unwilling to pay for fresh running water and waste collection and disposal.
- Waste often mixed with drinking water and rubbish piled up in the streets.
- Houses were closely packed together so disease spread quickly.
- There was no link between dirt and disease.
- Rats thrived on the rubbish

Monasteries

- Although the Monks who lived in them were not wealthy individually the monasteries were
- wealthy.
- They could afford good public health systems.
- The monasteries had fresh running water and waste disposal systems.
- Many were in isolated places which helped them to be free of disease.
- Monks did not keep clean because they thought it was more healthy but because of religious beliefs that cleanliness was important.

The Black Death

The Black Death came to Britain on trade ships.

It arrived in 1348.

It killed a third to half of the population.

There were 2 types of plague

Pneumonic - spread by sneezing - air born germs

Bubonic- spread by fleas. The fleas could live in clothes but initially they lived on rats.

Poor Public Health contributed to the problem as rats were in abundance.

People at the time did not know what caused the Black Death. This led to problems.

Many people believed it was sent by God. Others the planets were out of sync. Some believed it was caused by bad smells or a miasma. Others The Jews had poisoned the water. Science took a back seat in the battle against the Plague.