

DISEASES AND DEATH

For lesser complaints the patient could be bled or given a laxative to go to the toilet. Doctors believed the body was made up of four 'humours' - earth, air, fire and water. When someone was ill, it was because they had too much or too little of these humours and they needed to be put back into balance. Some believed diseases were linked to the phases of the moon, and even weather conditions.

Joseph Lawrence fell from the main deck into the hold and fractured the seventh rib. He was immediately bled to the amount of 16 ounces.

Joseph Lawrence

A fine sailor lad was aloft when he missed his hold and was pitched into the sea. Every effort was made to rescue him but the poor lad was some distance behind the ship. A boat was sent out and just when it arrived within an arm's length, he sunk to rise no more.

James Prior

Activities -You are training to be a physician aboard a Royal Navy ship. Make a note of the diseases and how they should be treated. If it were possible to travel in time, what advice would you give the doctor's?



Terrible injuries were ever present in battles such as these. What type of wounds would there be?

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London,

Notwithstanding the great advances that have been made in the science of medicine, we do not know sufficient of the laws which govern health.

George Magrath

A single infected man or even part of his clothing may spread sickness through the whole ship's company.

Gilbert Blane - the disease we now know as typhus spread by lice.