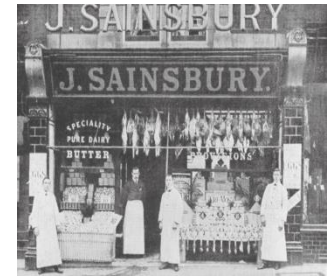


People's Health Knowledge Organiser

Britain since 1900



Living conditions

Housing

In 1909, Parliament banned new back-to-backs. In 1919 came a Housing Act, ordering councils to build new rented houses, to use taxes to fund it and set standards. Council houses were called 'homes fit for heroes' as the PM promised a country fit for heroes after WWI. The councils set up a committee to oversee new houses. However, the worst slums remained. In 1930, the government passed another Housing Act. This forced landlords to sell their slum houses to the council, where they cleared them and used the land for new homes.

Food

Canning of food became more reliable and the first tin of Heinz baked beans went on sale in 1905. Around 1900, stores like Sainsbury's became popular. They were open every day and had regular & reliable stock. Luxury items were common. In 1914 a working family spent 60% of its income on food, by 1937 this was 37%. The outbreak of WWII upset the pattern as importing food became harder. Rationing was introduced (continued until 1954). The health of the poor improved. After 1945, immigrants introduced new dishes. The microwave was invented in 1950 and by 1975 it was outselling gas cookers.

Coal

In 1800, Britain used 10 million tons of coal a year. By 1950 this was 200 million. The skies above cities were filled with smoke. In winter, smoke was trapped under fog and in 1905, someone came up with a word for this – 'smog'. The air was so thick with sulphur that some people couldn't get enough oxygen. They might get pneumonia or die. Between 4 and 12 December 1952, London's smog killed 12,000. The government passed the Clean Air Act in 1956.

Inactivity and technology

Research in 2013 showed poorer parts of society are the least active. 3/4 of people with no qualifications take little to no exercise. 44% of men and 33% of women were overweight. Since 2014 doctors have reported a rise in rickets, as children are spending less time outdoors. Using technology before bed can interfere with sleep and is linked to anxiety and depression. But technology can be good – it is used in medicine and apps/devices help to track health.

Government

During WW2, people's health was better because they were doing manual work, walking, growing vegetables and having rations. In 1956 the government passed the Clean Air Act. The government brought in laws to make sure housing is built to a safe standard e.g. Parliament's Housing Act of 1919. In April 2018 the sugar tax was introduced.

Cars

Car ownership increased by over ¼ between 1980 and 1990. From 2001, governments encouraged people to buy diesel vehicles. Since then scientists have shown that diesels cause more harm as they emit particles into the air that may cause cancer. Whether from petrol or diesel, cities are experiencing smog again. In 2014 and 2015, athletes in London were told not to train before the London marathon as there were high levels of pollutants in the air.

Spanish Flu

In Britain the Spanish flu killed 228,000. It was carried from labourers from China who worked in army camps. By 1918, it was rife in the trenches. Soldiers spread it to Britain when they returned. No one knew what caused the Spanish flu. Flu vaccines were not available – we still don't know how to cure flu today, although vaccines offer some protection. In 1918, Manchester's medical officer was Dr James Niven. In 1919 he wrote a report on the Spanish Flu. He kept records of each case and looked for patterns. He sent health visitors to record who was ill and what they needed. He arranged for extra grave-diggers to be appointed. He published advice in newspapers. He recommended the government invest money into research. He visited factories and schools. He tried a flu vaccine (which didn't work). He urged the council to shut schools. He said theatres and cinemas could stay open if they had good ventilation and were disinfected. He issued leaflets which said about hand washing, using handkerchiefs and face masks. He arranged for a film about flu to be shown. He used simple language e.g. "spit kills". 2,000 people died in Manchester, but this was higher in other cities.

AIDS

In the 1970s doctors came across a new condition. Victims suffered pneumonia, weight loss and sores. No one could explain it. In 1981, five gay men in LA and one in Britain died from it. In 1982, it was called AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, which is a condition where the victim can't fight infections. In 1984, scientists discovered the virus that causes AIDS and in 1986, named it HIV. Society's response can be divided into five main phases.

Phase 1 (1970s -1983) – Growing awareness

By 1982, seven people in Britain had died from AIDS. The Terrence Higgins Trust was set up. The media took an interest in 1983 when some people developed AIDS after a blood transfusion. Two documentaries were made. They emphasised AIDS was associated with gay men. Many people said it wasn't like cholera or Spanish Flu as it could be avoided if men stopped having sex with men and if drug users would stop. Some Church leaders preached AIDS was God's punishment.

Phase 2 (1984-85) – Growing alarm

People were unsure how easily AIDS could be spread, so they overreacted. Fears increased in 1985 when the Royal College of Nursing predicted that Britain would have one million cases by 991. The government ordered hospitals to detain patients with AIDS if they wished to leave. Doctors and visitors had to wear gowns, masks and gloves, which reinforced fears.

Phase 3 (1986-87) – Growing understanding

Charities gave needles to drug addicts to reduce infection. The government funded testing at hospitals and the screening of blood donations so transfusions were safe, and organised an AIDS prevention campaign. It sent a leaflet and ran adverts on how to avoid AIDS. TV programmes, posters and radio shows helped end myths. In April 1987 Princess Diana visited a clinic and had photos taken of her shaking hands with someone with AIDS

Phase 4 (1988-95) – Growing acceptance

In 1991, a storyline was included in Eastenders about a character with HIV. In the same year, Freddie Mercury died from AIDS. In 1992, a tribute concert and release of one of his greatest hits raised £20 million. AIDS was spreading but not at the predicted rate. Measures to make blood transfusions safe and advice about safe sex and not sharing needles was working. By 1995, about 25,000 people in Britain had been diagnosed HIV+. 12,000 had developed AIDS and 8,500 of these people had died.

Phase 5 (from 1996) – Growing complacency

In 1996 scientists devised 'anti-retrovirals' that delayed the onset of AIDS in people with HIV. They were expensive but government-funded. This had unexpected consequences: the government relaxed its campaigns, many believed that anti-retrovirals were a 'cure' and this led to complacency. Instead of falling, cases of HIV infection, as well as other STDs, have risen. In 2009, there were about 100,000 people in Britain with HIV. Of these, 40,000 were gay men and the rest were heterosexual men and women. About ¼ of those with HIV are not aware that they have it.

Smoking

1880s: Machines were invented that rolled cigarettes automatically and made them cheaply and more widely available.
 1962: Royal College of Physicians proved that smoking causes lung cancer and bronchitis.
 1964: Cigarette advertising banned on television.
 1971: Government health warnings was printed on cigarette packs.
 2007: Smoking banned in public places after a report showed 'passive smoking' kills more than 11,000 people in Britain.
 2016: All cigarette packages to be blank with no attractive colours.
 There are many reasons for the slow move towards ending tobacco smoking. Some say governments know they need the income from tax on cigarettes. Some feared a ban on smoking in public would increase smoking in the home which would threaten the health of children. Pubs and restaurants resisted it, believing it would lead to a drop in business.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

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| 1900 The Labour Party was formed to help workers improve working conditions. | 1905 The first tin of Heinz baked beans went on sale. | 1906 The start of the 'Liberal reforms' – the new government passed laws to make life better. | 1909 Housing law banned new back-to-back houses from being built. | 1918 Many women got the vote. And, by 1928, every adult could vote. | 1918-1919 Spanish Flu epidemic killed at least 50 million people. | 1948 The UN published its Declaration of Human Rights. | 1948 The National Health Service (NHS) was created. | 1982 AIDS was given its name. The first cases were reported in the 1970s. | 2007 Smoking was banned in all public places after a report showed the dangers of passive smoking. |
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