

Four Humors Chart

The four humors, and the system of medicine organized around them, influenced European medicine until at least the 1700s. In a healthy person, these four bodily fluids—blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm—were considered to be in balance. Most people were visualized as having a mild excess of one of the humors which determined not only their temperament but also their propensity to sickness and the kinds of disorders they could be expected to have.

Hippocrates' Four Fluids	blood	yellow bile	black bile	phlegm
Associated Elements	air	fire	earth	water
Associated Seasons and Qualities	spring, hot and moist	summer, hot and dry	winter, cold and dry	autumn, cold and moist
Galen's Four Humors, or Temperaments	sanguine	choleric	melancholic	phlegmatic
Associated Animals	goat	lion	owl and cat	tortoise
Associated Physical Characteristics When Each Humor Predominates	airy, young, pink and white companion	swarthy yellow, meager face, young	pale faced, cold, dry complexion, closed mouth	coughing, dropsy, gross body, coarse clothes
Associated Activities and Emotional and Moral Characteristics When Each Humor Predominates	fit for studies, prone to wine and women, merry, loving, beloved, gentle, benign, meek, fair spoken, bashful, seldom angry	fit for war, passions, reign, heedless, brave, cruel, angry	fit for solitary activities and studies, plodding constancy, silent, avaricious	fit for inactivity, sleeping, lazy, slothful, not educated or high-minded