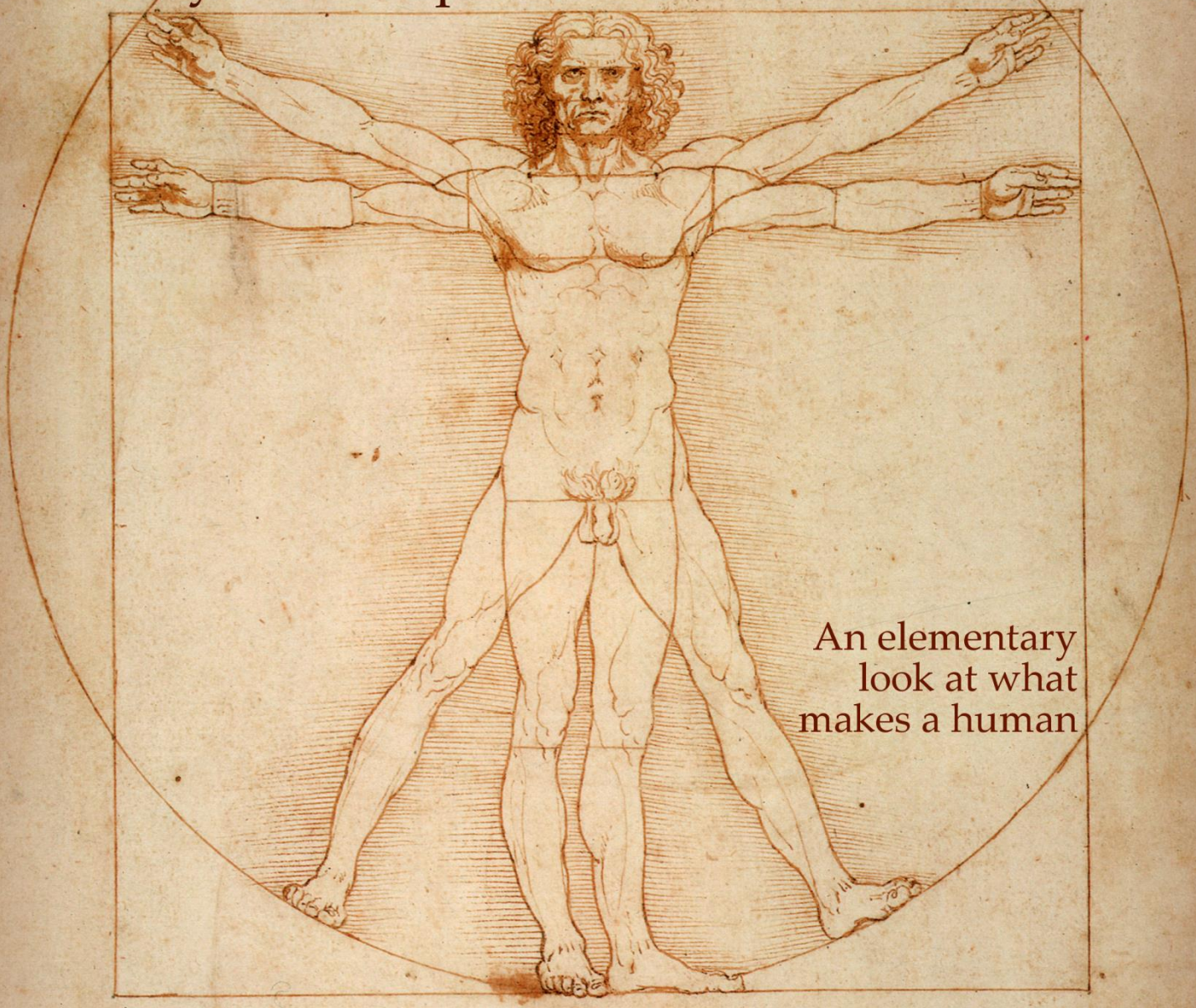
Chemistry of the Human Body

Dr Kathryn Harkup



An elementary look at what makes a human

Chemistry of the Human Body

"What a piece of work is a man!"

There are 92 naturally occurring elements in the Periodic Table but how many of them would you need to make a human? The chemical formula for a human has some surprising inclusions and the recipe to make a fully functioning person is carefully balanced. This talk looks at some interesting facts about the elements that make us what we are.

The Talk

45 to 60 minutes to any number of people

This talk looks at the role of five elements in human biology to illustrate the diversity and complexity of life processes. There is often a 'Goldilocks' amount of an element necessary to keep your body healthy, not enough of an element and things go wrong, but too much can be just as dangerous. Many elements perform a variety of roles in the body and determining these has involved matches, mad kings, foul smells and fainting goats.

Curriculum Links

Suitable for Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form

This talk relates to chemistry curriculum topics on the periodic table, empirical and molecular formula, bonding, electrochemical series and free radicals; and biology curriculum topics on proteins, enzymes, nutrition, health, homeostasis, respiration, blood and nerve impulses.

Contact

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