He died in his bed, surrounded by his spaniels, friends, and family, in the early hours of 6 February 1685. He wasn't kicked off his throne, nor was he beheaded like his father. His death was an entirely different breed than his father's: His killers were his doctors.

It is important to recognize that the doctors did not set out to cause the death of the king. But through their actions, they caused the already ailing Charles to approach death's door at an even faster pace than he already was.

**DAY ONE:** On the morning of 2nd February 1685, things seemed to be going normally for Charles. As he was preparing to shave, he suddenly cried out to pain, fell to the floor and suffered from a series of fits. Six royal physicians rushed into the Royal Bedchamber to help Charles. Their good intentions, however, paved the path to Charles' undoubtedly excruciating end. Once the seizure had passed, the first thing that the doctors did was let 16 ounces of blood from the king. As if that were not enough, they applied heated cups to the king's skin, so to form blisters. They believed that this would 'stimulate' his system, and once the blister was lanced, the disease would go away with its contents.

After they burned poor Charles, they drained him of 8 ounces of blood. Once that session of bleeding was finished, they gave the king a drug to induce vomiting, an enema to purify his bowels, and a purgative to clean out his intestines. They believed that the badness of the disease was not only in the blood, but also in the bowels.

They did not stop at this; he was then force-fed a syrup of sorts, containing blackthorn and rock salt, shaved his head and blistered his scalp, which caused the king to wake up again.

Any logical person would assume that the king's arousal meant he was faring better, and that they should ease off their treatment for some time. Sadly, that thought never crossed the minds of the physicians.

They administered yet another enema to the ailing king, put an irritant powder up his nostrils, blistered his skin even more, and applied cow-slip flowers to his stomach. To wrap up the day's 'treatment', they applied pigeon droppings to his feet. That torture lasted for 12 hours; once the 'care' was done, they put the king to bed.

**DAY 2:** This point was rather pivotal in Charles' fate: when he awoke, he seemed much improved. The royal doctors should have taken this as a sign that their treatment had miraculously worked, and stopped administering their horrific remedies to the king. They did not let the king enjoy the improvement of his health. It is likely that he would have survived past 54 years if his doctors
stopped on the second day.

As soon as Charles woke, they put him through the gauntlet again, each treatment more horrific than the last. They began to bleed the king yet again, but they did not bleed him from his arms or legs. No, the doctors went straight for the jugular. They opened both of Charles' jugular veins and bled him 10 ounces. At this point in the treatment, the king had already lost 34 ounces of blood. They then proceeded to feed him another potion, this one containing black cherries, peony, lavender, sugar, and crushed pearls. After he ingested the liquid, he slept through the day and night soundly.

**DAY THREE:** When Charles awoke that morning, he suffered another seizure. His ever predictable doctors decided to bleed the poor king yet again, before feeding him senna pods in spring water, and white wine with nutmeg. Obviously, Charles would have drank the wine with little acquiesce, but the next potion that was administered was force-fed.

The doctors forced him to intake a drink made of '40 drops of extract of human skull', taken from a man who met a very violent demise. As if eating bones was not awful enough, they also made him eat a gallstone (the Bezoar Stone) from an East Indian goat. After he had eaten an array of awful, disgusting things, the physicians proudly announced that the king was going to survive. They could not speak the truth of the situation; predicting the death of a sovereign counted as treason. It was quite obvious that Charles was not going to make it, thanks to the 'treatments'.

**DAY FOUR:** The king was near death on this day. Seeing his pitiful state of health, the doctors applied the hot cups to his skin again to form blisters, gave him another enema and emetic, and was bled yet again. This point was the only time in the entire treatment in which Charles received proper medicine. It was called Jesuit's Powder; a quinine remedy, laced with opium and wine. It only took the doctors four days to give the ailing king a little bit of opium to take the edge off the pain, which must have been close to unbearable.

The doctors, who had previously applauded themselves on their 'effective' treatment of the king, seemed mystified by his rapidly deteriorating condition. Did physicians of the 17th century not realize that when someone is bled extensively it weakens them?

**DAY FIVE:** Dr. Scarburgh, one of the royal doctors, wrote on the morning of 5th February 1685:

"Alas! After an ill-fated night, His Serene Majesty's strength seemed exhausted to such a degree that the whole assembly of physicians became despondent and lost hope."

In an attempt to invigorate the king, he was bled almost bloodless. Realizing that that was not helping poor Charles, the physicians then turned to gathering an antidote containing 'extracts of all the herbs and animals of the Kingdom' by scouring the palace grounds, and poured ammonia down his throat.

**DAY SIX:** 6th February 1685 was the last day for the monarch. The scene around his deathbed was one that still draws some emotion 300 years or more later. Charles, although incredibly weak and in a spectacular amount of pain, took to seeing each of his surviving children and mistresses for one last time.

After some time, Charles asked for the curtains of his room to be drawn back, so that he may view the sun over the Thames for one last time. As he took in the view, he said:

"I have suffered much more than you can imagine... You must pardon me, gentlemen, for being a most unconscionable time a-dying." He converted to Catholicism shortly before he died.

At 11:15am, on 6th February 1685, at the age of 54 years, King Charles II died.

It's said that Charles was suffering from a variety of ailments at this time; uraemia, malaria, mercury poisoning, chronic nephritis, and quite possibly some form of an STD. We know that he was ill, as seizures don't happen without an underlying cause, but we don't know what he was ill with. He would have most likely survived whatever ailment he suffered from for some amount of time - it is unlikely that he would have died without the help of his doctors. In the end, the doctors killed the king.