

Dawn Damico
Independent Copywriter, Consultant, Author
www.YourResearchDiva.com
252-862-3482
Client Sample: Alternative Health Article #1

The Client:

Clients in the Health and Wellness industry have numerous and varied content needs. Articles which inform their customers about the subject are used to establish the client as the “go-to” authority by establishing credibility through articles that are at once useful and interesting to the end user.

Scope of Project:

This article was written in response to a request for information for a newsletter.

Samples:

Attached is an example of an article.

The Value of This Project:

Articles can be used and repurposed in various ways including blog articles to grow your digital library, online and physical newsletters, digital books for lead generation, scripts for videos, physical books, and much more.

The Sample:

What?...Bubonic Plague in the States? What You Need to Know to Protect You and Your Family

Bubonic Plague. Black Death. Those spine tingling words sound like something that belongs to Medieval history, not modern times. So when news headlines inform us of a new case of bubonic plague right here in the U.S., literally in our own backyard, it can make you take pause...wonder...worry.

What exactly is bubonic plague? How do people get it? And most importantly, what can we do to prevent it from knocking on our own doorstep?

What is Bubonic Plague?

We know more about bubonic plague today than our medieval ancestors did. Back then, some believed it was caused by the wrath of God and was a form of punishment; today we know it's caused by the bacterium, *Yersinia pestis*.

Lucky for us, a bacteria is easier to identify and understand than an angry deity!

There are three forms of the plague identified in an infected person. Although mode of transmission can vary, origination begins directly or indirectly from the bite of an infected flea.

Bubonic plague: Symptoms include a sudden fever, headache, chills, weakness and one or more swollen lymph nodes. The swollen nodes are referred to as “buboes” which is where the term “bubonic plague” comes from. The swelling will occur at the point closest to where the person is bitten; however, most often appears in the groin, armpit, or neck. The job of lymph nodes is to trap bacteria. This area will become tender and enlarged as it traps the bacteria.

Septicemic plague: It's at this stage where the “black” in Black Death got its name. Untreated bubonic plague may enter the bloodstream which causes skin and tissue to turn black and die. The toes, fingers and nose are at most risk. Physical symptoms include fever, chills, abdominal pain, weakness, shock and bleeding into the skin and other organs. For some, this form could be the first sign of plague, skipping the symptoms of bubonic plague.

Pneumonic plague: As the name suggests, this form settles in the lungs and is the most serious form of the disease. Along with fever, headache, and weakness patients develop a sudden onset of pneumonia with chest pain, cough, shortness of breath and possible bloody or watery mucus. This form can be spread from person to person, or animal to person, by inhaling infected droplets. It can also be the result of the spread of untreated bubonic or septicemic plague that settles in the lungs.

How Do People Get Bubonic Plague?

The origin of the plague is an infected rodent; its transporter is a flea.

When a flea feasts on an infected animal, most often a member of the rodent family which includes chipmunks, prairie dogs, ground squirrels, mice and other mammals that may feast on the rodents, they carry the bacteria in their bloodstream.

The *Yersinia pestis* bacteria will only survive a few days in the blood of a rodent before the animal dies; however, the flea can carry the bacterium for a longer period of time. This extra time allows it to hop onto a new host once the original infected rodent has died.

The most common way people get bubonic plague is through the bite of a flea. There are several areas of the world with perfect climates to keep the bacteria alive; however, in the United States

it's generally found in the rural and semi-rural western states (Northern New Mexico, northern Arizona, southern Colorado, southern Oregon, and far western Nevada).

Most agree the bubonic plague during the Middle Ages originated in China and was carried across the ocean by ship as trading routes opened up and the world became more connected. Hygiene and food storage was primitive so it was very easy for infected rats, and their willing carriers, to travel from town to town and spread the plague. Because there is an incubation period for the bacteria, an infected person could travel, symptom free, for several days before realizing they were infected.

This incubation period is why ships bringing in goods were sometime quarantined for 30 to as many as 40 days before being allowed to enter port. That allowed enough time to determine if it carried an unwanted passenger.

Today, most people are infected after being bitten by an infected flea, handling an animal carrying the bacteria, working in a lab setting, or in some cases, through the air when they come in contact with infected droplets (as in a cough) from other humans or animals.

This last method of infection prompted the U.S. Government to put bubonic plague on the list of potential bioterrorism agents. The good news is the *Yersinia pestis* bacterium is sensitive to heat and light. This makes its off-host life very short, estimated at just one hour. Also, drugs and vaccines are being developed and stored for use with infected people.

It's been noted that human plague is often preceded by an "epizootic" event. This means a large number of rodents die, leaving their hungry, infected, fleas to seek blood from other hosts – animals, humans, and domestic pets. These events are likely to occur after a wet winter and when the summer months are cool.

How to Prevent Bubonic Plague?

Understanding bubonic plague has resulted in a reduction of incidences. The World Health Organization (WHO) is notified of between 1000 to 2000 cases worldwide; cases in the United States average just 7 per year.

There are practical things you can do to stay healthy, especially if you live in an area of the country where plague occurs:

- Keep the areas around where you live, play and work free of debris that could be a perfect nesting place for rodents. This includes brush, firewood, rock piles, and trash.
- Don't play with dead animals. Remember, if they are infected with fleas, those fleas will be looking for a new host to catch a ride with and that could be you or your pets.
- If you see sick or dead animals, report them to the local health department. Remember, plague outbreaks can follow an epizootic event.

- Prevent flea bites by using a repellent that contains DEET.
- Treat dogs and cats regularly for fleas and don't allow them to share a bed with you.
- If your pet gets sick, take them to the veterinarian promptly. Cats are more prone to getting the plague than dogs.
- Don't let dogs dig around or hunt in rodent habitats.

In addition, nutritionally fortify your body. Some believe the reason the bubonic plague was so devastating during the Middle Ages was because its arrival came right after a period of famine. As a result, it's possible people's immune systems were compromised and unable to fight off the infection.

Not everyone who is bit by a flea will get bubonic plague. However, understanding the symptoms, seeking medical attention if necessary, and taking precautions to avoid an incident goes a long way to keeping you (and your pets) healthy.

Sources:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/plague>
- <http://www.fda.gov/newsevents/newsroom/pressannouncements/ucm446283.htm>
- <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/biologicsbloodvaccines/newsevents/workshopsmeetingconferences/transcriptsminutes/ucm054438.pdf>
- http://www.nps.gov/public_health/info/factsheets/fs_plague.htm