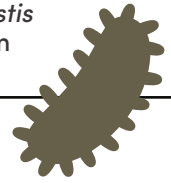


The Bubonic Plague

Yersinia pestis
bacterium



Part 1 Use the words below to fill in the blanks.

buboes • antibiotics • bacteria • Black Death • fleas • sanitation

The bubonic plague is a disease caused by bacteria called *Yersinia pestis*. It spreads through the bites of infected fleas that usually feed on rodents. These parasites can jump from rodents to people and infect a human population, so poor sanitation helps spread the disease. People with the plague suffer from high fevers and dark swellings called buboes. Without modern medicine, the bubonic plague can be quite deadly. In the 1300s CE, millions of people died from the bubonic plague in an event known as the Black Death. But today, most people can survive the bubonic plague if they receive antibiotics in time.

Part 2 Answer the questions below.

- How does the bubonic plague usually spread to humans?
The bubonic plague usually spreads from the bite of a flea infected with Yersinia pestis. Rats and other rodents can carry these fleas. Fleas from rodents can bite humans, spreading the bubonic plague.
- Why was the bubonic plague so deadly in the “Black Death” of the 1300s CE?
Living conditions were very dirty in the 1300s CE, so rodents and fleas could easily spread the plague. There were no antibiotics in the 1300s CE, so people who caught the plague often died.
- How does the bubonic plague affect people today?
The bubonic plague still occurs in many parts of the world. Modern antibiotics can usually treat the bubonic plague, and 90% of patients survive if they receive antibiotics quickly.

Part 3 Draw a line to match each Black Death cause to its effect.

BLACK DEATH CAUSE	EFFECT
People in the 1300s CE traded across long distances.	Most people survive the plague today.
Living conditions were very dirty in the 1300s CE.	Many people who caught the plague died from it.
Antibiotics did not exist in the 1300s CE.	Many homes had fleas that spread the plague.
Antibiotics treat the bubonic plague effectively.	The plague spread from Asia to Africa and Europe.