

CDRS

Communicable Disease Reporting System

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET

PLAGUE

The Plague is a severe disease caused by an infection with *Yersinia Pestis* type of bacteria that is found in rodents and transmitted to human by fleas. The disease is relatively rare in the United States and is limited to the west and southwestern parts of the country.

Symptoms

- The initial symptom is usually a swollen, inflamed and tender lymph gland in the body near where the infected flea bit the person.
- Fever is usually present.
- The disease may progress to a generalized blood infection that may result in pneumonia.
- People with pneumonic plague may transmit the disease to other people when coughing. About 14% of all plague cases in the U.S. are fatal.
- Symptoms usually begin within one to six days after exposure to the plague bacteria.

Transmission

- The most common means of transmission is by exposure to infected fleas.
- Other important sources include the handling of tissues from infected animals (especially rabbits or rodents), airborne droplets from humans or household pets with plague pneumonia or by laboratory exposure.

Treatment

- Certain antibiotics are effective in treating the disease.

Prevention

- The patient and his/her clothing and baggage should be treated to kill all fleas that may be attached.
- Patients with pneumonic plague should be quarantined until three full days of antibiotic treatment have been administered.
- When human or animal cases have been identified, efforts to control the rodent and flea populations by the use of rodenticides and insecticides should be used.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Franklin County



Board of Health

Report Disease With Ease - 24 hours a day

www.cdinfo.com

Columbus and Franklin County Communicable Disease Reporting System

c/o The Franklin County Board of Health, 280 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43215

(614) 719-8888 ♦ (614) 719-8890 fax ♦ cdrs@franklincountyohio.gov - email

