

# The Black Plague

*also known as the Black Death*

1347 - 1351



## 3 Forms of the Plague



Bubonic Plague  
painful lymph node swellings, buboes

Septicemic Plague  
attacked the blood system



Pneumonic Plague  
attacked the respiratory system

# The Bubonic Plague



Swellings “egg” or “apple”  
Fever of 101-105 degrees  
Headaches and Aching joints  
Vomiting  
Malaise

People with swellings might have a chance.

Mortality rate: 30-40%

Whole process: 3-5 days

# The Pneumonic Plague



2nd most common form of  
the plague

sputum infected the lungs

Bacteria in saliva coughed or  
sneezed up by sick persons

1-7 days for symptoms to appear

Mortality Rate: 90-95%



# The Septicemic Plague

DIC: disseminated intravascular coagulation  
(bleeding under the skin)

Attacked the  
blood system



caused the  
skin to turn  
dark purple,  
almost black

Victims usually died the same day symptoms appeared.

Mortality Rate: close to 100%

## Causes of the Plague

*Myths*

Foreigners or those of a different  
religion had poisoned the wells

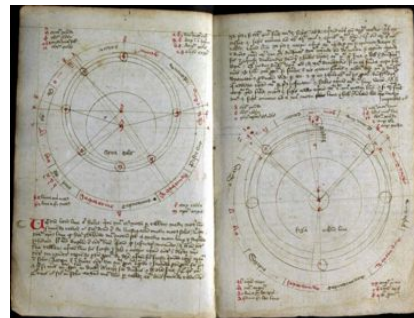


It was a punishment from God.



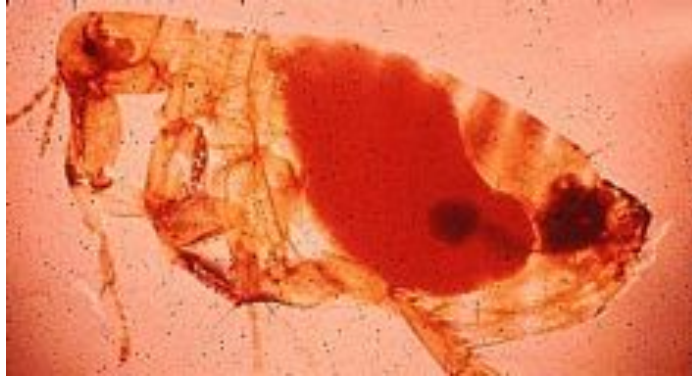
Bad air

The position  
of the planets



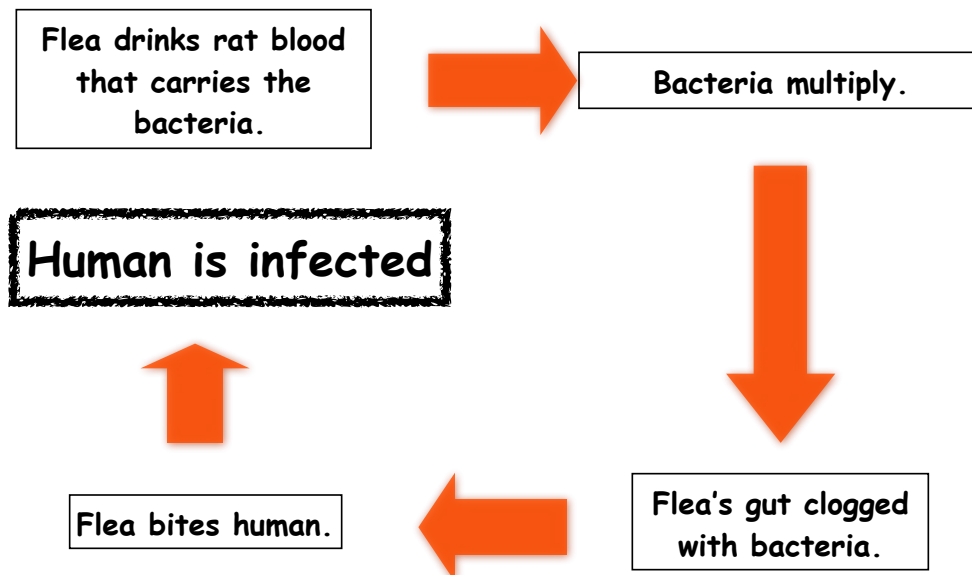
# Transmission of the Bubonic and Septicemic Plague

Direct contact with a flea



The Bacteria (*Yersinia pestis*) carried by rodents  
Fleas bite the rodent and move to human hosts  
*Xenopsylla cheopis*

## The Disease Cycle



**Day 1** Painful swellings called buboes appeared in the victim's armpits and groin. These were usually about the size of an egg, but could sometimes be as big as an apple.

**Day 2** The victim vomited and developed a fever.

**Day 3** Bleeding under the skin caused dark blotches all over the body.

**Day 4** The disease attacked the nervous system. This caused the victim to suffer spasms. The victim was in terrible pain.

**Day 5** Sometimes the buboes burst and a foul-smelling black liquid oozed from the open boils. When this happened the victim usually lived. However, in most cases the victim suffered a painful death.

**Buboes – swollen lumps in the groin, Neck, or armpit**

9

## Attempts to Stop the Plague



A Doctor's Robe



Flagellanti: self-inflicted "penance" for sins



"Leeching"



"Golden Circle" obligatory badge

Pogroms against Jews



# Why did the plague hit Europe so hard?

By 1300 Europeans were farming as much land as they could cultivate.

There were three years of crop failures between 1315-17.



Some villages lost up to 15% of their peasant population.

There was a lack of sanitation procedures for keeping towns clean.

The Bubonic Plague wiped out one-third of Europe's population between 1347 and 1351 - only 4 years!

