



# Plague Disease and Transmission

## Plague Disease

<p><b>How do you get plague?</b></p>	<p>A person can get plague from the bite of an infected flea. Plague bacteria are found in rats, mice, and their fleas.</p> <p>There are different ways you can get plague.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pneumonic plague:</b> inhaling the bacteria into the lungs and through close contact with an infected person.</li> <li>• <b>Bubonic plague:</b> through the bite of an infected flea or through a break in the skin.</li> <li>• <b>Septicemia plague:</b> can occur alone or as a complication of both bubonic and pneumonic plague. Bacteria multiply in the blood.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How is plague used as a bioterrorist agent?</b></p>	<p>Plague is attractive as a weapon because it generates fear, it spreads easily and it kills very quickly.</p> <p>It may possibly be spread through the air.</p>
<p><b>How can I protect myself?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be aware of your surroundings:</b> report sick or dead rodents to Environmental Health Services by calling the San Bernardino County Vector Control at (909) 388-4600.</li> <li>• <b>Wear gloves:</b> when handling animals that may be infected.</li> <li>• <b>Keep our area clean:</b> by not leaving any food that would attract rodents.</li> <li>• <b>If you may be exposed to rodent fleas:</b> apply insect repellent to clothing and skin, to prevent flea bites.</li> </ul> <p><b>Keep away from a person who has been exposed to pneumonic plague. When a person coughs, the plague bacterium goes into the air and can be breathed by another person.</b></p>
<p><b>How soon will I get sick?</b></p>	<p>A person usually becomes sick with pneumonic plague 1 to 6 days after being infected.</p>
<p><b>Symptoms?</b></p>	<p>First signs: fever, headache, weakness, shortness of breath, chest pain, cough, and sometimes bloody sputum.</p>