

Old Diseases

And what they mean today.

Ever wonder what all of those weird diseases listed on genealogical documents are? Well, now you can find out with our list of diseases and their present day meanings.

Ablepsy	Blindness
Ague	Malarial Fever
American plague	Yellow fever
Anasarca	Generalized massive edema
Aphonia	Laryngitis
Aphtha	The infant disease "thrush"
Apoplexy	Paralysis due to stroke
Asphyxia	Cyanotic and lack of oxygen
Atrophy	Wasting away or diminishing in size.
Bad Blood	Syphilis
Bilious fever	Typhoid, malaria, hepatitis or elevated temperature and bile emesis
Biliousness.....	Jaundice associated with liver disease
Black canker.....	severe diphtheria
Black plague or death	Bubonic plague
Black fever	Acute infection with high temperature and dark red skin lesions and high mortality rate
Black pox.....	Black Small pox
Black vomit	Vomiting old black blood due to ulcers or yellow fever
Blackwater fever.....	Dark urine associated with high temperature
Bladder in throat	Diphtheria (Seen on death certificates)
Blood poisoning	Bacterial infection; septicemia
Bloody flux	Bloody stools
Bloody sweat.....	Sweating sickness
Bone shave	Sciatica
Brain fever	Meningitis
Breakbone.....	Dengue fever
Bright's disease	Chronic inflammatory disease of kidneys
Bronze John	Yellow fever
Bule	Boil, tumor or swelling
Cachexia	Malnutrition
Cacogastric	Upset stomach
Cacospysy.....	Irregular pulse
Caduceus	Subject to falling sickness or epilepsy
Camp fever aka Camp diarrhea	Typhus
Canine madness.....	Rabies, hydrophobia
Canker.....	Ulceration of mouth or lips or herpes simplex
Catalepsy	Seizures / trances

Catarrhal	Cattarh is a cold (the al at the end makes it an adjective): Nose and throat discharge from cold or allergy
Cerebritis.....	Inflammation of cerebrum or lead poisoning
Chilblain.....	Swelling of extremities caused by exposure to cold
Childbed fever.....	Infection following birth of a child
Chin cough	Whooping cough
Chlorosis	Iron deficiency anemia
Cholera.....	Acute severe contagious diarrhea with intestinal lining sloughing
Cholera morbus.....	Characterized by nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, elevated temperature, etc. Could be appendicitis
Cholecystitis	Inflammation of the gall bladder
Cholelithiasis	Gall stones
Chorea	Disease characterized by convulsions, contortions and dancing
Cold plague	Ague which is characterized by chills
Colic	An abdominal pain and cramping
Congestive chills	Malaria
Consumption	Tuberculosis
Congestion	Any collection of fluid in an organ, like the lungs
Congestive chills.....	Malaria with diarrhea
Congestive fever.....	Malaria
Corruption.....	Infection
Coryza.....	A cold
Costiveness	Constipation
Cramp colic.....	Appendicitis
Crop sickness.....	Overextended stomach
Croup	Laryngitis, diphtheria, or strep throat
Cyanosis.....	Dark skin color from lack of oxygen in blood
Cynanche	Diseases of throat
Cystitis	Inflammation of the bladder
Day fever.....	Fever lasting one day; sweating sickness
Debility.....	Lack of movement or staying in bed
Decrepitude	Feebleness due to old age
Delirium tremens.....	Hallucinations due to alcoholism
Dengue.....	Infectious fever endemic to East Africa
Dentition	Cutting of teeth
Deplumation.....	Is falling of eyelashes as result of disease (not the disease itself). Tumor of the eyelids which causes hair loss
Diary fever.....	A fever that lasts one day
Diphtheria	Contagious disease of the throat
Distemper.....	Usually animal disease with malaise, discharge from nose and throat, anorexia
Dock fever.....	Yellow fever
Dropsy.....	Edema (swelling), often caused by kidney or heart disease
Dropsy of the Brain	Encephalitis
Dry Bellyache.....	Lead poisoning
Dyscrasia	An abnormal body condition

Dysentery.....	Inflammation of colon with frequent passage of mucous and Blood
Dysorexy.....	Reduced appetite
Dyspepsia	Indigestion and heartburn. Heart attack symptoms
Dysuria.....	Difficulty in urination
Eclampsia	Symptoms of epilepsy, convulsions during labor
Ecstasy.....	A form of catalepsy characterized by loss of reason
Edema	Nephrosis; swelling of tissues
Edema of lungs.....	Congestive heart failure, a form of dropsy
Eel thing	Erysipelas
Elephantiasis.....	A form of leprosy
Encephalitis aka sleeping sickness.....	Swelling of brain
Enteric fever.....	Typhoid fever
Enterocolitis	Inflammation of the intestines
Enteritis.....	Inflammations of the bowels
Epistaxis.....	Nose bleed
Erysipelas.....	Contagious skin disease, due to Streptococci with vesicular and bulbous lesions
Extravasted blood.....	Rupture of a blood vessel
Falling sickness.....	Epilepsy
Fatty Liver	Cirrhosis of liver
Fits.....	Sudden attack or seizure of muscle activity
Flux.....	An excessive flow or discharge of fluid like hemorrhage or diarrhea
Flux of humour	Circulation
French pox	Syphilis
Gathering.....	A collection of pus
Glandular fever.....	Mononucleosis
Great pox	Syphilis
Green fever / Green sickness	Anemia
Grippe/grip	Influenza like symptoms
Grocer's itch	Skin disease caused by mites in sugar or flour
Heart sickness.....	Condition caused by loss of salt from body
Heat stroke	Body temperature elevates because of surrounding environment temperature and body does not perspire to reduce temperature. Coma and death result if not reversed
Hectical complaint	Recurrent fever
Hematemesis.....	Vomiting blood
Hematuria	Bloody urine
Hemiplegy.....	Paralysis of one side of body
Hip gout.....	Osteomyelitis
Horrors.....	Delirium tremens
Hydrocephalus.....	Enlarged head, water on the brain
Hydropericardium	Heart dropsy
Hydrophobia	Rabies
Hydrothorax.....	Dropsy in chest
Hypertrophic.....	Enlargement of any structure, like a scar, muscle, or organ

Impetigo	Contagious skin disease characterized by pustules
Inanition	Physical condition resulting from lack of food
Infantile paralysis.....	Polio
Intestinal colic	Abdominal pain due to improper diet
Jail fever	Typhus
Jaundice	Condition caused by blockage of intestines
King's evil	"King's evil" is swelling of joints and lymph glands or scrofula, not necessarily from TB (the touch of a king was supposed to cure it)
Kruchhusten.....	Whooping cough
Lagrippe	Influenza
Lockjaw	Tetanus or infectious disease affecting the muscles of the neck and jaw. Untreated, it is fatal in 8 days
Lues disease	Syphilis
Lues venera	Venereal disease
Lumbago.....	Back pain
Lung fever	Pneumonia or tuberculosis
Lung sickness	Tuberculosis
Lying in	Time of delivery of infant
Malignant sore throat.....	Diphtheria
Mania	Insanity
Marasmus	Progressive wasting away of body, like malnutrition
Membranous Croup	Diphtheria
Meningitis	Inflammations of brain or spinal cord
Metritis	Inflammation of uterus or purulent vaginal discharge
Miasma.....	Poisonous vapors thought to infect the air
Milk fever.....	Disease from drinking contaminated milk, like undulant fever or brucellosis
Milk leg	Post partum thrombophlebitis
Milk sickness.....	Disease from milk of cattle which had eaten poisonous Weeds
Mormal.....	Gangrene
Morphew	Scurvy blisters on the body
Mortification.....	Gangrene of necrotic tissue
Mountain Fever.....	Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever
Myelitis	Inflammation of the spine
Myocarditis.....	Inflammation of heart muscles
Necrosis	Mortification of bones or tissue
Nephrosis	Kidney degeneration
Nepritis	Inflammation of kidneys
Nervous prostration	Extreme exhaustion from inability to control physical and mental activities
Neuralgia.....	Described as discomfort, such as "Headache" was neuralgia in head
Nostalgia.....	Homesickness
Palsy.....	Paralysis or uncontrolled movement of controlled muscles. It was listed as "Cause of death"
Paroxysm.....	Convulsion

Pemphigus	Skin disease of watery blisters
Pericarditis	Inflammation of heart
Peripneumonia.....	Inflammation of lungs
Peritonitis	Inflammation of abdominal area
Petechial Fever -.....	Fever characterized by skin spotting
Phthiriasis	Lice infestation
Phthisis	Chronic wasting away or a name for tuberculosis
Plague.....	An acute febrile highly infectious disease with a high fatality rate
Pleurisy.....	Any pain in the chest area with each breath
Podagra.....	Gout
Poliomyelitis.....	Polio, Potter's asthma - Fibroid pthisis
Pott's disease	Tuberculosis of spine
Puerperal exhaustion	Death due to childbirth
Puerperal fever.....	Elevated temperature after giving birth to an infant
Puking fever.....	Milk sickness
Putrid fever.....	Diphtheria
Quinsy.....	Tonsillitis
Remitting fever.....	Malaria
Rheumatism	Any disorder associated with pain in joints
Rickets.....	Disease of skeletal system
Rose cold.....	Hay fever or nasal symptoms of an allergy
Rotanny fever.....	Child's disease) ???
Roseola	Scarlet colored rash
Rubella	German measles - Rubeola the regular measles
Sanguineous crust.....	Scab
Scarlatina	Scarlet fever
Scarlet fever	A disease characterized by red rash
Scarlet rash	Roseola
Sciatica.....	Rheumatism in the hips
Scirrhus	Cancerous tumors
Scotomy	Dizziness, nausea and dimness of sight
Scrivener's palsy.....	Writer's cramp
Screws	Rheumatism
Scrofula.....	Tuberculosis of neck lymph glands. Progresses slowly with abscesses and pustules develop. Young person's disease
Scrupox	Skin disease, impetigo
Scurvy	Lack of vitamin C. Symptoms of weakness, spongy gums and hemorrhages under skin
Septicemia	Blood poisoning
Shakes.....	Delirium tremens
Shaking.....	Chills, ague
Shingles	Viral disease with skin blisters
Ship fever	Typhus
Siriasis	Inflammation of the brain due to sun exposure
Sloes.....	Milk sickness
Smallpox.....	Contagious disease with fever and blisters

Softening of brain	Result of stroke or hemorrhage in the brain, with an end result of the tissue softening in that area
Sore throat distemper	Diphtheria or quinsy
Spanish influenza	Epidemic influenza
Spasms	Sudden involuntary contraction of muscle or group of muscles, like a convulsion
Spina bifida	Deformity of spine
Spotted fever	Either typhus or meningitis
Sprue.....	Tropical disease characterized by intestinal disorders and sore throat
St. Anthony's fire	Also erysipelas, but named so because of affected skin areas are bright red in appearance
St. Vitas dance.....	Ceaseless occurrence of rapid complex jerking movements performed involuntarily
Stomatitis	Inflammation of the mouth
Stranger's fever	Yellow fever
Strangury	Painful, interrupted urination caused by spasms of the bladder or urethra
Sudor anglicus -	Sweating sickness
Summer complaint.....	Diarrhea, usually in infants caused by spoiled milk
Sunstroke.....	Uncontrolled elevation of body temperature due to environment heat. Lack of sodium in the body is a predisposing cause
Swamp sickness.....	Could be malaria, typhoid or encephalitis
Sweating sickness.....	Infectious and fatal disease common to UK in 15th Century
Tetanus	Infectious fever characterized by high fever, headache and dizziness
Thrombosis	Blood clot inside blood vessel
Thrush.....	Childhood disease characterized by spots on mouth, lips and throat
Tick fever.....	Rocky Mountain spotted fever
Toxemia of pregnancy.....	Eclampsia
Trench mouth	Painful ulcers found along gum line. Caused by poor nutrition and poor hygiene
Tussis convulsiva	Whooping cough
Typhus	Infectious fever characterized high fever, headache, and Dizziness
Variola.....	Smallpox
Venesection	Bleeding
Viper's dance	St. Vitus Dance
Water on brain	Enlarged head
White swelling.....	Tuberculosis of the bone
Winter fever	Pneumonia
Womb fever.....	Infection of the uterus
Worm fit	Convulsions associated with teething, worms, elevated temperature or diarrhea
Yellowjacket.....	Yellow fever