

OLD DISEASE NAMES AND THEIR MODERN DEFINITIONS

Over the many years, diseases have claimed billions of lives. Statistically speaking, some diseases of a particular name have not claimed many. But, upon further examination of the topic, one may find that the statistics are a little skewed by history's linguistics problem. For instance, what is called a "cold" today was most often referred to as something completely different many years ago; Coryza... This is a listing of many of those diseases, but is by no means all-inclusive. Here you will find 133 diseases and medical terms once known to our forebears as something else...

ABLEPSIA: Blindness

ACUTE MANIA: Severe insanity

AGLUTITION: Inability to swallow, frequently found on death certificates

AGUE: Used to define the recurring fever & chills of malarial infection

AGUE CAKE: A hard tumour or swelling on the left side of the abdomen, lower than the false rib, resulting from enlargement of the spleen or liver, and supposed to be the affect of intermittent fevers

ANCOME: Ulcerous swelling, also called Whitlow

APHONIA: Laryngitis

APOPLEXY: Stroke

BAD BLOOD: Syphilis

BARREL FEVER: Sickness produced by immoderate drinking

BILIOUS FEVER: Fever caused by liver disorder

BILIOUSNESS: Jaundice or other symptoms associated with liver disease

BLACK DEATH: Typhus, or Bubonic Plague

BLACK JAUNDICE: Wiel's Disease

BLACK LUNG: Disease from breathing coal dust, typical of coal miners' death certificates

BLOODY FLUX: Dysentery

BLOODY SWEAT: Sweat accompanied by a discharge of blood

BRIGHT'S DISEASE: Bright's disease is a catch-all for kidney diseases/disorders. It was used as late as 1913, but is no longer used by physicians. In its acute form, it was often called nephritis.

CAMP FEVER: Typhus

CANINE MADNESS: Hydrophobia, rabies in humans

CANKER RASH: Scarlet Fever, also called Scarlatina

CATARRH: Inflammation of the mucous membrane which caused profuse running of the eyes and nose.

CHILBLAIN: Infalamatory swelling of the hands and feet caused by exposure to cold.

CHILDBED FEVER: Septic poinsoning which sometimes followed the birth of a child. Also called Puerperal Fever.

CHIN COUGH: Characterized by breathing difficulties, and in its worst stage, convulsions. Also called Whooping Cough, or Pertussis.

CHLOROSIS: Iron deficiency anemia... but also a number of confounding diseases -
- like leukemia -- that were not recognized at the time. See also Green
- Sickness.

CHOREA: Dancing madness; an epidemic characterized by contortions, convulsions, and dancing. Also called Saint Vitus' Dance

COMMOTION: Concussion
CONGESTIVE FEVER: Malaria
CONSUMPTION: Tuberculosis
CORRUPTION: Infection
CORYZA: A cold
COSTIVENESS: Constipation
CRAMP COLIC: Appendicitis
CROUP: A congested cough that babies get.
CRETINISM: Congenital hypothyroidism

DANCING MADNESS: An epidemic characterized by contortions, convulsions, and dancing. Also called Saint Vitus' Dance, or Chorea

DAY FEVER: Fever of a day's duration or coming on in the daytime, also called sweating sickness

DIPHTHERIA: Infectious disease which could be spread by infected milk. It was characterized by the production of a systemic toxin and the formation of a false membrane on the lining of the mucous membrane of the throat and other respiratory passages, causing difficulty in breathing, high fever, and weakness. Also called Membranous Croup.

DOCK FEVER: Yellow Fever.

DROPSY: Edema (swelling, fluid buildup in some tissue or cavity) often caused by kidney or heart disease. Also, congestive heart failure.

DROPSY OF THE BRAIN: Encephalitis

DYSENTERY: Inflammation of the intestinal membrane most often accompanied by acute diarrhea

DYSPEPSIA: Acid indigestion

DYSURY: Difficulty in urination, accompanied by pain and a sensation of heat.

EDEMA: Swelling of tissues

ENTERITIS: Inflammation of the intestines, could also take the form of Enteric Fever (Typhoid)

ERYSIPHELAS: Skin disease caused by strep infection which devastates the blood, also called Saint Anthony's Fire

EXCRESCENCE: An unnatural or disfiguring outgrowth of the skin.

EXTRAVASATED BLOOD: Rupture of a blood vessel

FALLING SICKNESS: Epilepsy (aka. Jacksonian Epilepsy; aka. Jackson's March, so named for President Andrew Jackson who suffered this disease.)

FATTY LIVER: Cirrhosis of the liver

FLUX: Drainage or discharge of liquid from a body cavity.

FLUX OF HUMOUR: Circulation

FRENCH POX: Venereal disease

GALLOPING CONSUMPTION: Pulmonary tuberculosis

GLANDULAR FEVER: Mononucleosis

GLOMERULONEPHRITIS: A once relatively common childhood kidney disease that causes the kidney to leak protein. This is a secondary (allergic) reaction to certain kinds of strep infections. Also called Protein Disease.

GOITER: Noncancerous enlargement of the thyroid gland, visible as swelling at the front of the neck that is often associated with iodine deficiency. Common in many hill-folk along the Appalachian mountain chain.

GOUT: A disturbance of uric acid metabolism occurring predominantly in males, characterized by painful inflammation of the joints, especially of the hands and feet. Also called Podagra.

GRAVES DISEASE: Disorder of the thyroid gland

GREEN SICKNESS: Anemia, a disease of young women giving the complexion a greenish tinge. Also called Chlorosis.

GRIPPE or LE GRIPPE: Influenza (flu)

GROCER'S ITCH: A cutaneous disease caused by mites in sugar and flour

HALLUCINATION: Delirium

HEAT SICKNESS: A condition marked especially by cessation of sweating and extremely high body temperature, caused by a loss of salt from the body. Also called Heat Stress.

HEMATEMESIS: Vomiting of blood

HEMATURIA: Discharge of bloody urine

HEMIPHLEGY: Palsy or paralysis that affects one side of the body.

HIP GOUT: Osteomyelitis

HUMOUR: The term often used to mean blood.

IMPETIGO: A pustular disease of the skin, also called Scrumpox.

JAIL FEVER: Typhus - see Camp Fever above.

JAUNDICE: Condition caused by obstruction of bile and characterized by yellowness of the skin, fluids and tissues, and by constipation, loss of appetite, and weakness.

KING'S EVIL: Scrofula, a tubercular infection or tumors of the throat lymph glands

LA GRIPPE/LE GRIPPE: Flu, also known as Gripe.

LOCK JAW: Tetanus

LUES VENERA: Venereal disease

LUMBAGO: Back pain, or a pain in the loins and small of back such as precedes certain fevers.

LUNG FEVER: Pneumonia

LUNG SICKNESS: Tuberculosis

MANIA: Insanity

MARASMUS: Progressive emaciation, usually due to severe malnutrition or protracted intestinal disorders.

MEMBRANOUS CROUP: Diphtheria

MILK LEG: A painful swelling of the leg soon after childbirth, due to thrombosis of the large veins. (aka. PHLEGMASIA ALBA DOLENS)

MILK SICK: Not actually a disease, but a form of poisoning caused by cows ingesting leaves of the white snakeroot plant and passing along the toxin in their milk.

MORSAL: Gangrene

MORTIFICATION: Infection

NEPHRITIS: Inflammation of the kidneys, the acute form of Bright's Disease

NEURALGIA: Infection of one or more nerves causing intermittent but frequent pain.

NEURASTHENIA: Neurotic condition characterized by worry, disturbances of digestion and circulation, and attributed to emotional conflict and feelings of inferiority.

NOSTALGIA: Homesickness

PALSY: The loss or defect of the power of voluntary muscular motion in all or part of the body; paralysis.

PHLEGMASIA ALBA DOLENS: Milk Leg

PHRENITIS: An inflammation of the brain with acute fever delerium; also inflammation of the diaphram.

PLEURISY: Inflammaiton of the membrane that covers the inside of the thorax, accompanied with fever, pain and cough.

POX: Usually referred to syphilis, but also to any unknown disease that caused sores to appear on the body. A common curse through the ages was "A pox on you!"

PROTEIN DISEASE: Glomerulonephritis, a once relatively common childhood kidney disease that causes the kidney to leak protein. This is a secondary (allergic) reaction to certain kinds of strep infections.

PERTUSSIS: Characterized by breathing difficulties, and in its worst stage, convulsions. Also called Whooping Cough, or Chin Cough.

PODAGRA: Gout

POTT'S DISEASE: Tuberculosis of the spinal vertabrae.

PUERPERAL FEVER: Septic poinsoning which sometimes followed the birth of a child. Also called Childbed Fever.

PUTRID FEVER: Diphtheria

QUINSY or QUINCY: Severe attack of Tonsillitis resulting in abscess near the tonsils.

REMITTING FEVER: Malaria

RHEUMATISM: Painful disease affecting muscles and joints, chiefly the larger joints.

RICKETS: Disease of the skeletal system resulting from a deficiency of calcium or Vitamin D in the diet, or from lack of sunlight.

SAINT ANTHONY'S FIRE: Skin disease caused by strep infection which devastates the blood, also called Erysiphelas

SAINT VITUS' DANCE: An epidemic characterized by contortions, convulsions, and dancing. Also called Dancing Madness, or Chorea

SANGUINEOUS CRUST: Scab

SCARLATINA: Scarlet Fever, commonly referred to as the Canker Rash.

SCARLET FEVER: Disease in which the body is covered with a red rash first appearing on the neck and breast, and accompanied by a sore throat. Also called Scarlatina or Canker Rash.

SCIATICA: Rheumatism in the hip.

SCOTOMY: Dizziness or nausea, with dimness of sight.

SCREWS: Rheumatism

SCRIVENER'S PALSY: Writer's cramp

SCROFULA: See KINGS EVIL

SCRUMPOX: Impetigo, a pustular disease of the skin.

SCURVY: Disease characterized by great dibility, a pale bloated face, and bleeding spongy gums. Usually suffered by people living confined or on salted meats without fresh vegetables.

SEPTCEMIA: Blood poisoning (from an infection).

SHIPS FEVER: Typhus

STRANGERY: Rupture

SUMMER COMPLAINT: Baby diarrhea caused by spoiled milk

SWEATING SICKNESS: Fever of a day's duration or coming on in the daytime, also called Day Fever

TOXEMIA OF PREGNANCY: Eclampsia; high blood pressure and seizures.

TYPHOID or TYPHUS: Enteric Fever; an acute infectious fever, characterized by high fever, dizziness, and headache. Also called Black Death.

TYPHUS: See TYPHOID

ULCERATION: Loss of the surface covering, such as of skin or the mucous lining of the intestine.

VENESECTION: Bleeding, or blood letting; the opening of a vein for releasing Bad Humours. Also called Phlebotomy.

WHITLOW: Ulcerous swelling, a boil. Also called Ancome.

WHOOPING COUGH: A highly contagious disease of the respiratory system, usually affecting children, that is characterized in its advanced stage by spasms of coughing interspersed with deep, noisy inspirations.

WINTER FEVER: Pneumonia

YELLOW JACKET: Yellow fever