

Causes of Death in Genealogical Research

Often in genealogy a researcher encounters an archaic medical term used for the cause of death, or perhaps in a journal or family correspondence, this list is intended to aid with interpreting those terms.

Abasia - Inability to walk or stand, caused by hysteria.

Ablepsy - Blindness, also Ablepsia, Abopsia.

Abscess - A localized collection of pus buried in tissues, organs, or confined spaces of the body, often accompanied by swelling and inflammation and frequently caused by bacteria. The brain, lung, or kidney (for instance) could be involved. See boil.

Accouchment - childbirth, the period after childbirth.

Acute - (adj.) disease of sudden onset, severe, not chronic.

Addison's disease - A disease characterized by severe weakness, low blood pressure, and a bronzed coloration of the skin, due to decreased secretion of cortisol from the adrenal gland. Dr. Thomas Addison (1793-1860), born near Newcastle, England, described the disease in 1855. Synonyms: Morbus addisonii, bronzed skin disease.

Aegrotat - Is sick from.

Aegrotantem - Sickness, illness.

Ague - Malarial Fever; Malarial or intermittent fever characterized by paroxysms (stages of chills, fever, and sweating at regularly recurring times) and followed by an interval or intermission whose length determines the epithets: quotidian, tertian, quartan, and quintan ague (defined in the text). Popularly, the disease was known as "fever and ague," "chill fever," "the shakes," and by names expressive of the locality in which it was prevalent--such as, "swamp fever" (in Louisiana), "Panama fever," and "Chagres fever."

Ague-cake - A form of enlargement of the spleen, resulting from the action of malaria on the system.

American plague - Yellow fever.

Anasarca - Generalized massive edema. see dropsy.

Anchylosis/ankylosis - Abnormal stiffening and immobility of a joint by fusion of the bones.

Angina - Pain in chest brought on by exertion; intense constricting pain especially of the throat, can lead to suffocation; quinsy.

Aphonia - Laryngitis.

Aphtha/aphthae - see thrush.

Aphthous stomatitis - see canker.

Apoplexy - Paralysis due to stroke.

Ascites - see dropsy.

Asphyxia/Asphixia - Cyanotic and lack of oxygen.

Asthenia - see debility.

Atrophy - Wasting away or diminishing in size.

Bad Blood - Syphilis.

Bilious fever - A term loosely applied to certain enteric (intestinal) and malarial fevers; Typhoid, malaria, hepatitis or elevated temperature and bile emesis /fever due to a liver disorder, See typhus.

Biliousness - Jaundice associated with liver disease; A complex of symptoms comprising nausea, abdominal discomfort, headache, and constipation; formerly attributed to excessive secretion of bile from the liver.

Black plague/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.

Blood poisoning - Bacterial infection; septicemia.

Bloody flux - Bloody stools; dysentery.

Bloody sweat - Sweating sickness.

Boil - An abscess of skin or painful, circumscribed inflammation of the skin or a hair follicle, having a dead, pus-forming inner core, usually caused by a staphylococcal infection. Synonym: furuncle.

Bone shave - Sciatica.

Brain fever - see meningitis, typhus.

Breakbone - Dengue fever.

Bright's disease - Chronic inflammatory disease of kidneys; kidney disease; glomerulonephritis.

Bronchial asthma - A paroxysmal, often allergic disorder of breathing, characterized by spasm of the bronchial tubes of the lungs, wheezing, and difficulty in breathing air outward, often accompanied by coughing and a feeling of tightness in the chest.

Bronze John - Yellow fever.

Brucellosis - bacterial disease, especially of cattle, causing undulant fever in humans.

Bule - Boil, tumor or swelling.

Cachexy - Malnutrition.

Cacogastric - Upset stomach.

Cacospysy - Irregular pulse.

Caduceus - Subject to falling sickness or epilepsy.

Camp fever - Typhus; aka Camp diarrhea, typhoid fever.

Cancer - A malignant and invasive growth or tumor (especially tissue that covers a surface or lines a cavity), tending to recur after excision and to spread to other sites. In the nineteenth century, physicians noted that cancerous tumors tended to ulcerate, grew constantly, and progressed to a fatal end and that there was scarcely a tissue they would not invade. Synonyms: malignant growth, carcinoma.

Cancrum otis - A severe, destructive, eroding ulcer of the cheek and lip, rapidly proceeding to sloughing. In the last century it was seen in delicate, ill-fed, ill-tended children between the ages of two and five. The disease was the result of poor hygiene acting upon a debilitated system. It commonly followed one of the eruptive fevers and was often fatal. The destructive disease could, in a few days, lead to gangrene of the lips, cheeks, tonsils, palate, tongue, and even half the face; teeth would fall from their sockets, and a horribly fetid saliva flowed from the parts. Synonyms: canker, water canker, noma, gangrenous stomatitis, gangrenous ulceration of the mouth.

Canine madness - Rabies, hydrophobia.

Canker - An ulcerous sore of the mouth and lips, not considered fatal today; herpes simplex Synonym: aphthous stomatitis. See cancrum otis.

Catalepsy - Condition which causes Seizures/trances or unconsciousness.

Catarrh - Inflammation of a mucous membrane, especially of the air passages of the head and throat, with a free discharge. It is characterized by cough, thirst, lassitude, fever, watery eyes, and increased secretions of mucus from the air passages. Bronchial catarrh was bronchitis; suffocative catarrh was croup; urethral catarrh was gleet; vaginal catarrh was leukorrhea; epidemic catarrh was the same as influenza. Synonyms: cold, coryza. Nose and throat discharge from cold or allergy; influenza.

Cerebritis - Inflammation of cerebrum or lead poisoning.

Chilblain - Swelling of extremities caused by exposure to cold and then heat; extremities turn black and itch unbearably.

Childbed - Childbirth.

Child bed fever - Infection following birth of a child; puerperal fever.

Childbirth - A cause given for many female deaths of the century. Almost all babies were born in homes and usually were delivered by a family member or a midwife; thus infection and lack of medical skill were often the actual causes of death.

Chin cough - Whooping cough.

Chlorosis - Iron deficiency anemia; condition of pale or greenish skin, weakness, & dyspepsia.

Cholecystitis - Inflammation of the gall bladder.

Cholelithiasis - Stones of the gall bladder.

Cholera - An acute, infectious disease, endemic in India and China and now occasionally epidemic elsewhere: characterized by profuse diarrhea, vomiting, and cramps. It is caused by a potent toxin discharged by the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*, which acts on the small intestine to cause secretion of large amounts of fluid. The painless, watery diarrhea and the passing of rice-water stool are characteristic. Great body-salt depletion occurs. Cholera is spread by feces-contaminated water and food. Major epidemics struck the United States in the years 1832, 1849, and 1866. In the 1830s the causes were generally thought to be intemperance in the use of ardent spirits or drinking bad water; uncleanness, poor living or crowded and ill-ventilated dwellings; and too much fatigue. By 1850 cholera was thought to be caused by putrid animal poison and miasma or pestilential vapor rising from swamps and marshes, or that it entered the body through the lungs or was transmitted through the medium of clothing. It was still believed that it attacked the poor, the dissolute, the diseased, and the fearful, while the healthy, well-clad, well-fed, and fearless man escaped the ravages of cholera.

Cholera infantum - A common, noncontagious diarrhea of young children, occurring in summer or autumn. In the nineteenth century it was considered indigenous to the United States; was prevalent during the hot weather in most of the towns of the middle and southern states, as well as many western areas; and was characterized by gastric pain, vomiting, purgation, fever, and prostration. It was common among the poor and in hand-fed babies. Death frequently occurred in three to five days. Synonyms: summer complaint, weaning brash, water gripes, choleric fever of children, cholera morbus.

Cholera morbus - Characterized by nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, elevated temperature, etc. Could be appendicitis

Chorea - Any of several diseases of the nervous system, characterized by jerky movements that appear to be well co-ordinated but are performed involuntarily, chiefly of the face and extremities; convulsions, contortions and dancing. Synonym: Saint Vitus' dance.

Chronic - Persisting over a long period of time as opposed to acute or sudden. This word was often the only one entered under "cause of death" in the mortality schedules. The actual disease meant by the term is open to speculation.

Cold plague - Ague which is characterized by chills.

Colic - Paroxysmal pain in the abdomen or bowels. Infantile colic is benign paroxysmal abdominal pain during the first three months of life. Colic rarely caused death; but in the last century a study reported that in cases of death, intussusception (the prolapse of one part of the intestine into the lumen of an immediately adjoining part) occasionally occurred. Renal colic can occur from disease in the kidney, gallstone colic from a stone in the bile duct.

Confinement - the conclusion of pregnancy; labor and childbirth.

Congestive chills - Malaria.

Consumption - A wasting away of the body; formerly applied especially to pulmonary tuberculosis. The disorder is now known to be an infectious disease caused by the bacterial species *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Synonyms: marasmus (in the mid 19th century), phthisis.

Congestion - An excessive or abnormal accumulation of blood or other fluid in a body part, blood vessel or an organ, like the lungs Congestive chills. Malaria with diarrhea.

Congestive fever - Malaria Corruption Infection.

Convulsions - Severe contortion of the body caused by violent, involuntary muscular contractions of the extremities, trunk, and head. See epilepsy.

Coryza - A cold. see catarrh.

Costiveness - Constipation.

Cramp colic - Appendicitis.

Crop sickness - Overextended stomach.

Croup - Any obstructive condition of the larynx (voice box) or trachea (windpipe), characterized by a hoarse, barking cough and difficult breathing occurring chiefly in infants and children. The obstruction could be caused by allergy, a foreign body, infection, or new growth (tumor). In the early 19th century it was called cynanche trachealis. The crouping noise was similar to the sound emitted by a chicken affected with the pip, which in some parts of Scotland was called roup; hence, probably, the term croup; Laryngitis, diphtheria, or strep throat; a childhood illness. Synonyms: roup, hives, choak, stuffing, rising of the lights.

Cyanosis - Dark skin color; blueness of skin caused by lack of oxygen in blood.

Cynanche - Diseases of throat.

Cystitis - Inflammation of the bladder.

Day fever - Fever lasting one day; sweating sickness.

Debility - Abnormal bodily weakness or feebleness; decay of strength. This was a term descriptive of a patient's condition and of no help in making a diagnosis. Lack of movement or staying in bed. Synonym: asthenia.

Decrepitude - Feebleness due to old age.

Delirium tremens - aka DTs; hallucination due to alcoholism.

Dengue - Infectious fever endemic to East Africa.

Dentition - Cutting of teeth, see teething.

Deplumation - Tumor of the eyelids which causes hair loss.

Diary fever - A fever that lasts one day.

Diphtheria - An acute infectious disease caused by toxigenic strains of the bacillus *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, acquired by contact with an infected person or a carrier of the disease. It was usually confined to the upper respiratory tract (throat) and characterized by the formation of a tough membrane (false membrane) attached firmly to the underlying tissue that would bleed if forcibly removed. In the nineteenth century the disease was occasionally confused with scarlet fever and croup.

Distemper - Usually animal disease with malaise, discharge from nose and throat, anorexia.

Dock fever - Yellow fever.

Dropsy - A contraction for hydropsy. Edema, the presence of abnormally large amounts of fluid in intercellular tissue spaces or body cavities. Abdominal dropsy is ascites; brain dropsy is hydrocephalus; and chest dropsy is hydrothorax. Cardiac dropsy is a symptom of disease of the heart and arises from obstruction to the current of blood through the heart, lungs, or liver. Anasarca is general fluid accumulation throughout the body. Edema (swelling), often caused by kidney or heart disease.

Dropsy of the Brain - Encephalitis.

Dry Bellyache - Lead poisoning.

Dyscrasy - An abnormal body condition.

Dysentery - A term given to a number of disorders marked by inflammation of the intestines (especially of the colon) and attended by pain in the abdomen, by tenesmus (straining to defecate without the ability to do so), and by frequent stools containing blood and mucus. The causative agent may be chemical irritants, bacteria, protozoa, or parasitic worms. There are two specific varieties: (1) amebic dysentery caused by the protozoan *Entamoeba histolytica*; (2) bacillary dysentery caused by bacteria of the genus *Shigella*. Dysentery was one of the most severe scourges of armies in the nineteenth century. The several forms of dysentery and diarrhea accounted for more than one-fourth of all the cases of disease reported during the first two years of the Civil War. Synonyms: flux, bloody flux, contagious pyrexia (fever), frequent griping stools.

Dysorexy - Reduced appetite.

Dyspepsia - Indigestion and heartburn. Heart attack symptoms; bad digestion.

Dysury - Difficulty in urination.

Eclampsy - A form of toxemia (toxins, or poisons, in the blood) accompanying pregnancy, characterized by albuminuria (protein in the urine), by hypertension (high blood pressure), and by convulsions. In the last century, the term was used for any form of convulsion.

Ecstasy - A form of catalepsy characterized by loss of reason.

Edema - Nephrosis; swelling of tissues. see Dropsy.

Edema of lungs - Congestive heart failure, a form of dropsy.

Eel thing - Erysipelas.

Effluvia - Exhalations or emanations, applied especially to those of noxious character. In the mid-nineteenth century, they were called "vapours" and distinguished into the contagious effluvia, such as rubeolar (measles); marsh effluvia, such as miasmata; and

those arising from animals or vegetables, such as odors.

Elephantiasis - Gross enlargement of the body, especially the limbs, due to lymphatic obstruction by a nematode parasite transmitted by mosquitoes; a form of leprosy.

Emphysema, pulmonary - A chronic, irreversible disease of the lungs, characterized by abnormal enlargement of air spaces in the lungs and accompanied by destruction of the tissue lining the walls of the air sacs. By 1900 the condition was recognized as a chronic disease of the lungs associated with marked dyspnea (shortness of breath), hacking cough, defective aeration (oxygenation) of the blood, cyanosis (blue color of facial skin), and a full and rounded or "barrel-shaped" chest. This disease is now most commonly associated with tobacco smoking.

Encephalitis - Swelling of brain; aka sleeping sickness.

Enteric fever - see Typhoid fever.

Enterocolitis - Inflammation of the intestines.

Enteritis - Inflammations of the bowels.

Epilepsy - A disorder of the nervous system, characterized either by mild, episodic loss of attention or sleepiness (petit mal) or by severe convulsions with loss of consciousness (grand mal). Synonyms: falling sickness, fits.

Epitaxis - Nose bleed.

Erysipelas - An acute, febrile, infectious disease, caused by a specific group of streptococcus bacterium and characterized by a diffusely spreading, deep-red inflammation of the skin or mucous membranes causing a rash with a well-defined margin; Contagious skin disease, due to infection of the blood with vesicular bulbous lesions. Synonyms: Rose, Saint Anthony's Fire.

Extravasated blood - Rupture of a blood vessel.

Falling sickness - see 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. see dysentery.

Flux of humour - Circulation.

French pox - Syphilis.

Furuncle - see boil.

Gangrene - Death and decay of tissue in a part of the body, usually a limb, due to injury, disease, or failure of blood supply. Synonym: mortification.

Gathering - A collection of pus.

Glandular fever - Mononucleosis (mono).

Gleet - see catarrh.

Goitre - Enlarged thyroid gland which affects body's metabolism.

Gout - Chronic metabolic disorder affecting the joints, associated with hypertension, uric acid in the blood and kidney disease, often associated with a rich and fatty diet (and red wine).

Gravel - A disease characterized by multiple small calculi (stones or concretions of mineral salts) which are formed in the kidneys, passed along the ureters to the bladder,

and expelled with the urine. Synonym: kidney stone.

Grave's disease - Thyrotoxicosis.

Great pox - Syphilis.

Green fever/sickness - Anemia.

Grippe/grip - Influenza like symptoms; the flu; influenza.

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 - A daily recurring fever with profound sweating, chills, and flushed Hectic Fever appearance, often associated with pulmonary tuberculosis or septic poisoning.

Hematemesis - Vomiting blood.

Hematuria - Bloody urine.

Hemiplegy - Paralysis of one side of body.

Hip gout - Osteomyelitis.

Hives - A skin eruption of weals (smooth, slightly elevated areas on the skin) which is redder or paler than the surrounding skin. Often attended by severe itching, it usually changes its size or shape or disappears within a few hours. It is the dermal evidence of allergy. See the discussion under croup; also called cyananche trachealis. In the mid-nineteenth century, hives was a commonly given cause of death of children three years and under. Because true hives does not kill, croup was probably the actual cause of death in those children.

Horrors - Delirium tremens.

Hospital Fever - see typhus.

Hydrocephalus - Enlarged head, water on the brain; dropsy of the brain. see dropsy.

Hydropericardium - Heart dropsy.

Hydrophobia - Rabies; fear of water.

Hydrothorax - Dropsy in the chest. see dropsy.

Hypertrophic - Enlargement of organ, like the heart.

Hypertrophy of heart - Enlarged heart.

Hysteria - Wild uncontrollable emotion, excitement, functional disturbance of the nervous system.

Icterus - see jaundice.

Impetigo - Contagious skin disease characterized by pustules.

Inanition - Exhaustion from lack of nourishment; starvation. A condition characterized by marked weakness, extreme weight loss, and a decrease in metabolism resulting from severe and prolonged (usually weeks to months) insufficiency of food.

Infantile paralysis - Polio.

Infection - The affection or contamination of a person, organ, or wound with invading, multiplying, disease-producing germs (such as bacteria, rickettsiae, viruses, molds,

yeasts, and protozoa). In the early part of the last century, infections were thought to be the propagation of disease by effluvia (see above) from patients crowded together.

"Miasms" were believed to be substances which could not be seen in any form, emanations not apparent to the senses. Such miasms were understood to act by infection.

Inflammation - Redness, swelling, pain, tenderness, heat, and disturbed function of an area of the body, especially as a reaction of tissue to injurious agents. This mechanism serves as a localized and protective response to injury. The word ending -itis denotes inflammation on the part indicated by the word stem to which it is attached, as in: appendicitis, pleuritis, etc. Microscopically, it involves a complex series of events, including enlargement of the sizes of blood vessels; discharge of fluids, including plasma proteins; and migration of leukocytes (white blood cells) into the inflammatory focus. In the last century, cause of death often was listed as inflammation of a body organ, such as brain or lung, but this was purely a descriptive term and is not helpful in identifying the actual underlying disease.

Intestinal colic - Abdominal pain due to bad or improper diet.

Intussusception - The slipping of one part within another, as the prolapse of one part of the intestine into the lumen of an immediately adjoining part. This leads to obstruction and often must be relieved by surgery. Synonym: introsusception.

Jail fever - see typhus.

Jaundice - Yellow discoloration of the skin, whites of the eyes, and mucous membranes, due to an increase of bile pigments in the blood - often symptomatic of certain diseases, such as hepatitis, obstruction of the bile duct, or cancer of the liver; Condition caused by blockage of intestines (common in newborn babies) Synonym: icterus.

Kidney Stone - see gravel.

King's evil - A popular name for scrofula. The name originated in the time of Edward the Confessor, with the belief that the disease could be cured by the touch of the king of England. Tuberculosis of neck and lymph glands.

Kruchhusten - Whooping cough.

Lagrippe - Influenza.

Lockjaw - Tetanus, an infectious disease affecting the muscles of the neck and jaw in which the jaw becomes firmly locked. Untreated, it is fatal in 8 days. Synonyms: trismus, tetanus.

Lues disease - Syphilis.

Lues venera - Venereal disease; sexually transmitted disease (STD).

Lumbago - Back pain.

Lung fever - Pneumonia.

Lung sickness - Tuberculosis.

Lying in - Time of delivery of infant.

Malignant Fever - see typhus.

Malignant sore throat - see Diphtheria.

Mania - Insanity.

Marasmus - Malnutrition occurring in infants and young children, caused by an insufficient intake of calories or protein and characterized by thinness, dry skin, poor muscle development, and irritability. In the mid-nineteenth century, specific causes were associated with specific ages: In infants under twelve months old, the causes were believed to be unsuitable food, chronic vomiting, chronic diarrhea, and inherited syphilis. Between one and three years, marasmus was associated with rickets or cancer. After the age of three years, caseous (cheeselike) enlargement of the mesenteric glands (located in the peritoneal fold attaching the small intestine to the body wall) became a given cause of wasting. (See tabes mesenterica.) After the sixth year, chronic pulmonary tuberculosis appeared to be the major cause. Marasmus is now considered to be related to kwashiorkor, a severe protein deficiency.

Membranous Croup - Diphtheria.

Meningitis - Inflammation of the meninges (the three membranes covering the brain and spinal cord), especially of the pia mater and arachnoid, caused by a bacterial or viral infection and characterized high fever, severe headache, and stiff neck or back muscles. Synonym: brain fever.

Metritis - Inflammation of uterus or purulent vaginal discharge.

Miasma - Poisonous vapors thought to infect the air.

Milk fever - Disease from drinking contaminated milk; fever which effects lactating women (mastitis?).

Milk leg - Post partum thrombophlebitis.

Milk sickness - Disease from milk of cattle which had eaten poisonous weeds.

Morbus - Latin word for disease. In the last century, when applied to a particular disease, morbus was associated with some qualifying adjective or noun, indicating the nature or seat of such disease. Examples: morbus cordis, heart disease; morbus caducus, epilepsy or failing sickness.

Mormal - Gangrene.

Morphew Scurvy - Blisters on the body.

Mortification - Gangrene of necrotic tissue.

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 - Sharp and paroxysmal pain along the course of a sensory nerve. There are many causes: anemia, diabetes, gout, malaria, syphilis. Many varieties of neuralgia are distinguished according to the part affected, such as face, arm, leg.

Nostalgia - Homesickness.

Palsy - Paralysis or uncontrolled movement of controlled muscles; loss of muscle control.

Paristhmitis - see quinsy.

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 spotting of the skin. see typhus.

Phthiriasis - Lice infestation.

Phthisis - Chronic wasting away due to ,or a name for, tuberculosis or consumption. see consumption.

Plague - An acute febrile highly infectious disease with a high fatality rate.

Pleurisy - Inflammation of the pleura, the membranous sac lining the chest cavity, with or without fluid collected in the pleural cavity. Symptoms are chills, fever, dry cough, and pain in the affected side (a stitch).

Pneumonia - Inflammation of the lungs with congestion or consolidation, caused by viruses, bacteria, or physical and chemical agents.

Podagra - Gout.

Poliomyelitis - Polio.

Potter's asthma - Fibroid pthisis.

Pott's disease - Tuberculosis of spine.

Puerperal exhaustion - Death due to child birth.

Puerperal fever - Elevated temperature after giving birth to an infant; septic poisoning associated with child birth.

Puking fever - Milk sickness.

Pus - A yellow-white, more or less viscid substance found in abscesses and sores, consisting of a liquid plasma in which white blood cells are formed and suspended by the process of inflammation.

Putrid fever - Diphtheria; typhus. see typhus.

Putrid sore throat - Ulceration of an acute form, attacking the tonsils and rapidly running into sloughing of the fauces (the cavity at the back of the mouth, leading to the pharynx).

Pyrexia - see dysentery.

Quinsy - (streptococcal) Tonsillitis; A fever, or a febrile condition. An acute inflammation of the tonsils, often leading to an abscess; peritonsillar abscess. Synonyms: suppurative tonsillitis, cyanche tonsillaris, paristhmitis, sore throat.

Remitting fever - Malaria.

Rheumatism - Any disorder associated with pain in joints.

Rickets - Disease of skeletal system caused by vitamin D deficiency.

Rose cold - Hay fever or nasal symptoms of an allergy.

Rotanny fever - (Child's disease) ???

Rubeola - German measles.

Sanguineous crust - Scab.

Scarlatina - Scarlet fever. A contagious febrile disease, caused by infection with the bacteria group. A beta-hemolytic streptococci (which elaborate a toxin with an affinity for red blood cells) and characterized by a scarlet eruption, tonsillitis, and pharyngitis.

Scarlet fever - A disease characterized by red rash. see Scarlatina.

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 - Primary tuberculosis of the lymphatic glands, especially those in the neck. A disease of children and young adults, it represents a direct extension of tuberculosis into the skin from underlying lymph nodes. It evolves into cold abscesses, multiple skin ulcers, and draining sinus tracts. Synonym: king's evil.

Scrumptox - Skin disease, impetigo.

Scurvy - Lack of vitamin C. Symptoms of weakness, spongy gums and hemorrhages under skin.

Septic - Infected, a condition of local or generalized invasion of the body by disease-causing microorganisms (germs) or their toxins.

Septicemia - Blood poisoning.

Shakes - Delirium tremens.

Shaking - Chills, ague.

Shingles - Viral disease characterized by skin blisters (closely related to chickenpox - cannot get shingles unless previously affected by chickenpox. often brought on by stress. most commonly the blisters develop on the back - extremely itching),

Ship fever - see Typhus.

Siriasis - Inflammation of the brain due to sun exposure.

Sloes - Milk sickness.

Small pox - Contagious disease characterized by 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; apoplexy.

Sore throat distemper - Diphtheria or quinsy.

Spanish influenza - An 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; cerebrospinal meningitis fever. see Typhus.

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. Vitus' dance - Ceaseless occurrence of rapid complex jerking movements performed involuntarily. see chorea.

Stomatitis - Inflammation of the mouth.

Stranger's fever - Yellow fever.

Strangery - Rupture.

Sudor anglicus - Sweating sickness.

Suffocation - The stoppage of respiration. In the nineteenth century, suffocation was reported as being accidental or homicidal. The accidents could be by the impaction of pieces of food or other obstacles in the pharynx or by the entry of foreign bodies into the larynx (as a seed, coin, or food). Suffocation of newborn children by smothering under bedclothes may have happened from carelessness as well as from intent. However, the deaths also could have been due to SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), wherein the sudden and unexpected death of an apparently healthy infant, while asleep, typically occurs between the ages of three weeks and five months and is not explained by careful postmortem studies. Synonyms of SIDS: crib death and cot death. It was felt that victims of homicidal suffocation were chiefly infants or feeble and infirm persons.

Summer complaint - Diarrhea, usually in infants caused by spoiled milk. see Cholera infantum.

Sunstroke - Uncontrolled elevation of body temperature due to environment heat. Lack of sodium in the body is a predisposing cause.

Suppuration - The production of pus.

Swamp sickness - Could be malaria, typhoid or encephalitis.

Sweating sickness - Infectious and fatal disease common to UK in 15th century.

Tabes mesenterica - Tuberculosis of the mesenteric glands in children, resulting in digestive derangement and wasting of the body.

Teething - The entire process which results in the eruption of the teeth. Nineteenth-century medical reports stated that infants were more prone to disease at the time of teething. Symptoms were restlessness, fretfulness, convulsions, diarrhea, and painful and swollen gums. The latter could be relieved by lancing over the protruding tooth. Often teething was reported as a cause of death in infants. Perhaps they became susceptible to infections, especially if lancing was performed without antisepsis. Another explanation of teething as a cause of death is that infants were often weaned at the time of teething; perhaps they then died from drinking contaminated milk, leading to an infection, or from malnutrition if watered-down milk was given.

Tetanus - An infectious, often-fatal disease caused by a specific bacterium, *Clostridium tetani*, that enters the body through wounds; characterized by respiratory paralysis, high fever, and tonic spasms and rigidity of the voluntary muscles, especially those of the neck and lower jaw. Synonyms: trismus, lockjaw.

Thrombosis - Blood clot inside blood vessel.

Thrush - A disease characterized by whitish spots and ulcers on the membranes of the mouth, tongue, and fauces caused by a parasitic fungus, *Candida albicans*. Thrush usually affects sick, weak infants and elderly individuals in poor health. Now it is a common complication from excessive use of broad-spectrum antibiotics or cortisone treatment. Synonyms: aphthae, sore mouth, aphthous stomatitis.

Thyrotoxicosis - A disease affecting the thyroid gland.

Tick fever - Rocky mountain spotted fever.

Toxemia (of pregnancy) - see Eclampsia.

Trench mouth - Painful ulcers found along gum line, caused by poor nutrition and poor hygiene.

Trismus nascentium/neonatorum - A form of tetanus seen only in infants, almost invariably in the first five days of life, probably due to infection of the umbilical stump.

Tussis convulsiva - Whooping cough.

Typhoid fever - An infectious, often-fatal, febrile disease, usually occurring in the summer months, characterized by intestinal inflammation and ulceration caused by the bacterium *Salmonella typhi*, which is usually introduced by food or drink. Symptoms include prolonged hectic fever, malaise, transient characteristic skin rash (rose spots), abdominal pain, enlarged spleen, slowness of heart rate, delirium, and low white-blood cell count. The name came from the disease's similarity to typhus (see below). Synonym: enteric fever.

Typhus - An acute, infectious disease caused by several micro-organism species of *Rickettsia* (transmitted by lice and fleas) and characterized by acute prostration, high fever, depression, delirium, headache, and a peculiar eruption of reddish spots on the body. The epidemic or classic form is louse borne; the endemic or murine is flea borne. Synonyms: typhus fever, malignant fever (in the 1850s), jail fever, hospital fever, ship fever, putrid fever, brain fever, bilious fever, spotted fever, petechial fever, camp fever.

Undulant Fever - Intermittant fever caused by brucellosis. also called abortus fever.

Variola - Smallpox.

Venesection - Bleeding.

Viper's dance - St. Vitus' Dance.

Virus - An ultramicroscopic, metabolically inert infectious agent that replicates only within the cells of living hosts, mainly bacteria, plants, and animals. In the early 1800s virus meant poison, venom, or contagion.

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.

Yellow fever - An acute, often-fatal, infectious febrile disease of warm climates, caused by a virus transmitted by mosquitoes, especially *Aedes aegypti*, and characterized by liver damage and jaundice, fever, and protein in the urine. In 1900 Walter Reed and others in Panama found that mosquitoes transmit the disease. Clinicians in the late nineteenth century recognized "specific yellow fever" as being different from "malarious yellow fever." The latter supposedly was a form of malaria with liver involvement but

without urine involvement. See epidemics for major outbreaks.
Yellowjacket - Yellow fever.