

Pestilence Rising: Teenage Girl Hospitalized With Bubonic Plague

A teenage girl in Oregon has tested positive for bubonic plague, state health officials said on Thursday.

The girl was believed to have been infected by a flea bite during a hunting trip earlier this month, according to the Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division and the Crook County Public Health Department.

The teen was in an intensive care unit at a hospital in Bend, in central Oregon, health officials said. Her condition was not known.

There were no other known infections in the state from the centuries-old scourge, health officials said.

"Many people think of the plague as a disease of the past, but it's still very much present in our environment, particularly among wildlife," said Emilio DeBess, Oregon state public health veterinarian in the Public Health Division.

"Fortunately, plague remains a rare disease, but people need to take appropriate precautions with wildlife and their pets to keep it that way," he said.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the plague was introduced to the United States in 1900 by rat-infested steamships that had sailed from affected areas, mostly in Asia.

In recent years, less than 10 human plague cases have been reported in the U.S. each year, the agency said.

Early symptoms of plague include high fever, chills, nausea,

weakness and swollen lymph nodes in the neck, armpit or groin.
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