



ZOONOTIC CONCERN

plague

Cause: *Yersinia pestis*

Occurrence in animals: wild rodents mainly (rats, squirrels, prairie dogs, mice)

Source in animals: blood and saliva

Exposure: flea bites; bites and scratches by infected animals

Symptoms:

- Animals:
 - buboes (abscesses)
 - frequently death
- Humans:- two main presentations:
 - bubonic (fever, chills, muscle ache, headache, swollen glands)
 - pneumonic (fever, cough, chills)

Precautions:

- Good personal hygiene:
 - **WASH HANDS** after handling animals and their environment
 - No eating, drinking, smoking, ... around animals
- Handle potentially infected animals with gloves
- Wear long sleeves and gloves for field studies
- Treatment of wild-caught rodents against ectoparasites
- If accidental exposure should occur, seek medical attention immediately
- Organism can persist for a few months in the environment

Additional information about plague can be found at:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/diseases/plague.htm>
- <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/msds-ftss/msds169e.html>
- <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/plague.pdf>