

## Causes of the Great Plague

### Astrology

In October 1664 Jupiter and Saturn there was alignment between these two planets and in November that year Mars and Saturn had the exact same thing which meant there was bad luck. So, must people blamed that for The Great Plague.

### Punishment of God

Many people the Great Plague was a punishment from God. So that he could clean up his kingdom

### Miasma

The most popular theory was the Great Plague was caused by Miasma. People believed that miasma was created by rubbish and dunghills. The vapor of it stayed in the soil and it still smelt



## The Great Plague

### Government Action

The local governments would follow the rules King Charles II set to help prevent the plague. They were:

- Public meetings were banned
- Theatres closed
- Streets cleaned regularly
- Fires on street corners – the barrels were filled with herbs
- Animals were killed if they were seen on the streets

Searchers would come to houses to see if any members of the household had it and if they had any they would have to quarantine for 28 days.



Quack Doctor- Somebody who did not have any medical qualification, but who sold their services as a doctor or apothecary

Preventions of the Great Plague Physicians recommendations:

- Prayer and repentance
- Quarantining
- Carrying a pomander
- Various diets
- Wore bird like masks that had herbal remedies in it so they had no miasma

### Treatment of the Great Plague

There wasn't that many treatments for the Plague. But a few of them were:

- Wearing woolen clothing so the plague would sweat out of them
- Strapping a live chicken to a bubo or lancing with a chicken feather
- Herbal remedies

### Quack Doctors-

In the time of the plague, there were special types of physicians called Quack Doctors. They would treat all patients wealthy or poor. They gave them medicine or treatment but not normal treatment. The Quack doctors would sell people out of date or 'gone off' medicine. People believed that it was normal medicine and would buy it, but little did they know it wouldn't work.

### Physicians-

Plague doctors practiced bloodletting and other remedies such as putting frogs or leeches on the buboes to "rebalance the humours" as a normal routine. Plague doctors could not generally interact with the general public because of the nature of their business and the possibility of spreading the disease.

### Government-

The outbreak of bubonic plague that struck London and Westminster in 1636 provoked the usual frenzied response to epidemics, including popular flight and government-mandated quarantine. ... Another cause of controversy was the government's use of quarantine as a punishment to control individuals found breaking other laws.

### Causes of the Plague-

Some people also believe that astrology came into play to cause this, even going back to theories like the 4 humours which were later found out to be incorrect. Some people believe that miasma caused this, so they tried to make sure that the air was always clear. But how did it end? the Black Plague did continue to infect Russia and the Ottoman Empire well into the 19th century. To this day, nobody knows exactly why or how the Black Death finally came to an end.

### Cures-

Some believed that to cure the disease you would need to use herbal remedies, this would help to ward off miasma. Some prayed to god and confess their sins.

## The Great Plague 1665





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### Ideas about the cause of the great plague

#### Astology

There was an unusual alignment between Saturn & Jupiter in October 1664, and between Mars & Saturn on the 12th of November. These were seen as unlucky combinations which suggested there was trouble ahead. Worse still, a comet had been spotted, too.

#### Punishment from God

Many people believed the Great Plague was a result of mankind's wickedness & that God had sent it to clean up his kingdom.

#### Miasma

In contrast to the black death outbreak in 1348, by far the most popular theory about the spread of the Great Plague in 1665 was that it was caused by miasma. People believed miasma was created by the stinking rubbish & dungheils that were a feature of the 17th century life. Miasma was present in the soil, where it was as long as the weather stayed cold. As long as the weather stayed cold, the weather turned warmer, however, the miasma would pour out of the earth as a rising miasma. This fitted the pattern of plague outbreaks generally appeared when the weather began to turn warmer.

#### Other people

By 1665, many people believed the correct idea was that disease could be spread from person to person, although, as there was no proof that this was the case it was the most popular theory. However, plague victims were still quarantined. Even people who believed a miasma caused the disease believed that once people had caught it, they could pass it on to others.

#### Approaches to treatment of the great plague

We don't know a great deal about treatments that were given to plague victims in 1665. This is partially because so many of them were shut up with family members in quarantine, so there were not many records of the methods! & they attempted to keep people alive.

One method we do know is physicians advised that patients be wrapped in thick wadded cloths and laid by a fire so they could sweat the disease out. ~~from~~

Transference was another idea - methods such as strapping a live chicken to a bubo, or lancing with a feather plucked from a live chicken, were meant to draw out poison and help the patient to recover.

Recipes for herbal remedies continued to be popular. These took the form of medicines, tinctures or rubs.

Quack doctors (Somebody with no medical qualifications but sold their services as a doctor) but advantage of the general public. They mixed remedies & advertised them as fabulous cures, hoping to make some easy money. People still didn't understand the cause of the Great Plague so therefore they couldn't treat it effectively. The best advice was the same as it had always been: make sure you don't catch it in the first place.

### Approaches to preventing the great plague

#### Advice from Physicians

The college of physicians recommended a variety of preventative measures that could have been taken to avoid catching the great plague.

- Prayer & repentance
- Quarantine anybody who had the plague
- Carrying a pomander was a way to drive away miasma.
- Various diets were suggested, from eating almost nothing to eating a diet full of garlic, sage and sage fried in butter.

Plague doctors wore special costumes to avoid catching the plague from their patients. They had oiled, bird-like masks, with sweet smelling herbs to ward off the miasma. Birds were meant to attract disease, so it was thought the disease might be attracted to the bird and not leave the patient. More practically, the cloak would be treated with brimstone to make

sure that none of the piss or blood from the patient soaked into it.

#### Advice from other healers

Most people turned to local healers for help in warding off the plague. Recipes for plague water, a treatment for the plague, were popular among apothecaries. Some relied on native herbs that would have been used in England for centuries, such as mint & rosemary, whilst others contained new, exotic ingredients such as nutmeg and agar. Smoking tobacco was encouraged to ward off the miasma.

Some people thought that, because buboes were a symptom of both syphilis & the great plague, catching syphilis prevented a person from catching the great plague. It went out on their way to become infected with syphilis - though this, of course, did not prevent from catching the Great Plague.

#### Government action:

Local governments also tried to prevent the plague. Unlike the first large outbreak of the plague, they did more, and so did the king. Charles II made people should fast regularly and made a law to try to stop the spread of the plague. The by local government officials of each city, including public meetings, fairs & even large funerals. Theatres were closed, street allies were fires were set to burn on street corners, or strewn with sweet smelling herbs, to drive away the miasma. Cats, dogs & pigeons were killed if they



Around 40,000 dogs & 200,000 cats were killed because people believed they were helping to spread the disease.

The mayor also granted searches & wardens to monitor the spread of the disease. Searchers would go from house to house to see if there was any plague victims in each one. If a household was infected, the inhabitants were either taken to the pest house or quarantined inside the house for 20 days. The house was painted with a red cross together with the words, "Lord have mercy on us." The parish officials were in charge of bringing them food and other necessities. Every day, carts would travel through the city to collect the dead bodies.

Many people believed the best way to avoid the great plague was the same as it had been in 1348: run away. People in 1665 still did not know what caused the great plague, but they realised this ignorance could kill them. Since there was no known cure for the disease, people focussed on prevention, since methods of prevention had been successful in the past. Rather than attempt wild treatments, they put their energy into stopping the disease from spreading, or into escaping it completely.

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Wednesday 13th January 2021

### Government

Local governments also tried to prevent the plague from spreading. Unlike the first large outbreak of the plague, this time they did more, and so did the king. Charles II decreed that people should fast regularly and made a list of actions to try to stop the spread of the plague. These were carried out by local government officials of each city including the mayor. Public meetings, fairs and even large funerals were banned. Theatres were closed. Streets and alleyways were swept and cleaned. Fires were set to burn on street corners, often in barrels of tar evil miasma. Cats, dogs and pigeons were killed if they were seen on the street. Around 40,000 dogs and 200,000 cats were slaughtered because people thought they were helping to spread the disease. The mayor also appointed searches and wardens to monitor the spread of the disease. Searchers would go from house to house, checking to see if there were any plague victims in each one. If a household was infected the inhabitants were either taken to the pest house or quarantined inside the house for 28 days. The house was painted with a red cross together with the words, 'Lord have mercy on us'.

## Treatments

We don't know a great deal about treatments that were given to plague victims in 1665. This is partly because so many of them were shut up with family members in quarantine so there are not many records of the methods they attempted to keep people alive.

We do know that some of the new ideas about treatment of diseases had an impact on plague treatments in 1665. As was the fashion at the time, physicians advised that patients be wrapped in thick wollen clothing and laid by a fire so that they could sweat the disease out. Transference was also a popular idea - methods such as strapping a live chicken to a bubo or lancing it with a feather plucked from a live chicken, were meant to draw out the poison and help the patient to recover. Recipes for herbal remedies continued to be extremely popular, these took the form of medicines, poultices or rubs.

**Quack doctors** = took advantage of the general panic. They mixed remedies and advertised them as fabulous cures, hoping to make some easy money. Quack doctor = somebody who did not have any medical qualifications, but who sold their services as a doctor or apothecary.

## Prevention

**Advice from physicians** - The college of physicians recommended a variety of preventative measures that could be taken to avoid catching the Great Plague:

- Prayer and repentance
- Quarantine anybody who had the plague
- Carrying a pomander was a way to drive away miasma. A pomander was a ball containing perfumed substances.
- Various diets were suggested, from eating almost nothing (fasting) to eating a diet heavy with garlic and sage fried in butter.
- Plague doctors wore special costumes to avoid catching the plague from their patients. They had hooked, birdlike masks, with sweet-smelling herbs to ward off the miasma.



Monday 11th January 2021

## The Great Plague

L.O: To understand what the Great Plague was and how society struggled to treat and prevent it spreading.

### Causes of the plague.

**Astrology** = There had been an unusual alignment between Saturn and Jupiter in October 1664, and between Mars and Saturn on 12 November. These were seen as unlucky combinations that suggested there was trouble ahead. Worse still, a comet had been spotted, too.

**Punishment from God** = Many people believed that Great Plague was a result of mankind's wickedness and that God had sent it to clean up his kingdom.

**Miasma** = People believed this miasma had been created by the stinking rubbish and dunghills that were a feature of 17th-century city life. The vapour was present in the soil, where it would stay as long as the weather stayed cold. When the weather turned warmer, however, the vapour would pour out of the earth as a plague-carrying miasma. This fitted the pattern of the infection: Plague outbreaks generally appeared when the weather began to turn warmer.

**Other people** = By 1665, many people believed the correct idea that disease could be spread from person to person, although, as there was no proof that this was the case it was not the most popular theory. However, Plague victims were still quarantined. Even people who believed a miasma caused the disease believed that, once people had caught it, they could pass it on to others.