

GLOSSARY

Words in SMALL CAPITALS can be looked up elsewhere in the Glossary.

acute refers to symptoms or illnesses which are severe and intense for a short duration.

anaemia ('without blood') the medical condition anaemia can be caused by a diet low in iron, or may be triggered by parasites.

antibiotic a general term for a range of drugs, including penicillin, that are effective in treating BACTERIAL infections.

anti-contagionist a term used in the 19th century to describe a scientist or physician who did not believe that diseases were caused by CONTAGIOUS particles spread from person to person.

bacterial See bacterium.

bacterium (pl. bacteria) a group of single-celled microscopic organisms found everywhere in the environment and in the human body. Bacteria can live harmlessly in the human body but some may also cause serious infections, including plague, cholera and tuberculosis.

bejel a non-venereal form of syphilis, commonly a DISEASE OF children, transmitted by close contact, occurring in the arid regions of North Africa, the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean.

botulism first used in the 19th century to describe a DISEASE thought to be caused by eating contaminated sausage. It is now known to be caused by toxins produced from BACTERIA; although relatively rare, it can be fatal.

bronchitis an inflammation of the bronchi (the airways that connect the trachea, or windpipe, to the lungs) which results in a severe cough.

bubo a swelling in the groin which became a hallmark of bubonic plague.

chronic often used to refer to DISEASES that are protracted, persistent or recurring over time.

contagious a CONTAGIOUS DISEASE is one that might be transmitted by close touch or contact with an infected person.

diphtheria a severe and highly CONTAGIOUS BACTERIAL DISEASE, usually in children, that attacks the throat and nose.

disease (literally 'dis-ease' or absence of 'ease') the opposite of good health. In practice, the term is applied to any sickness, ailment or departure from sound health.

dropsy a condition that causes swelling in body tissues due to an accumulation of excess fluid.

dysentery a BACTERIAL or amoebic infection causing severe pain, usually accompanied by diarrhoea containing blood and mucus.

endemic a DISEASE that is not necessarily widely prevalent but typically found and always present among people of a particular place.

epidemic a DISEASE that affects a large number of people at a given time.

epidemiology the study of EPIDEMICS or DISEASES affecting groups of people.

febrile with fever.

germ theory a term often used to describe the theory developed in the mid- to late 19th century that DISEASES are caused by specific micro-organisms.

goitre a condition that gives rise to a swelling in the neck due to an enlarged thyroid gland, which may

be caused by a number of factors, including iodine deficiency.

haemophilia an inherited bleeding disorder caused by a deficiency of a particular blood protein, known as Factor V111, which is essential to the process of blood clotting.

haemorrhage (adj. haemorrhagic; haemorrhaging) bleeding or blood loss. Haemorrhagic fevers typically cause bleeding internally (where blood leaks from blood vessels inside the body) and externally (from mouth and other orifices).

immunology the study of the immune system which plays a vital role in the outcome of DISEASE in an individual.

inoculation a term used initially for the practice of inserting matter from dried smallpox scabs into a person's body in the hope of providing long-term protection against the DISEASE; later superseded by VACCINATION.

in vitro the technique of performing an experiment in a controlled environment outside the living organism (e.g., in a test tube or other laboratory glassware).

Lassa fever an ACUTE viral HAEMORRHAGIC fever named after the town of Lassa in Nigeria, where a missionary nurse died from the DISEASE in 1969.

latent (n. latency) describes a period between initial infection and the time when the symptoms of a DISEASE become fully manifest.

Legionnaires' disease a pneumonia-like BACTERIAL DISEASE which was first recognized among delegates to an American Legion convention in Philadelphia in 1976.

Lyme disease a BACTERIAL DISEASE transmitted by infected ticks and named after the first recognized

cluster of cases in Old Lyme, Connecticut, USA in 1975.

malignant (meaning 'born to be bad') most commonly used to refer to cancerous tumours that are likely to be serious or may spread and recur.

Marburg fever or Marburg HAEMORRHAGIC fever; a rare but potentially fatal viral infection named after the town of Marburg in Germany where the first cases occurred in 1967 in laboratories handling infected monkeys.

miasmatist a 19th-century term referring to a scientist who believed that DISEASES were caused by 'miasmas' or noxious vapours.

mumps a viral DISEASE, usually in children, causing swelling of certain glands, especially in the area between the ear and jaw.

palaeopathology the scientific study to detect signs of ancient DISEASES, most often from skeletal remains.

pandemic used to describe a DISEASE that is global, or that affects a significantly high proportion of people across the world.

Parkinson's disease a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system that often impairs the motor skills and speech. It is named after the British physician James Parkinson (1755-1824), who in 1822 described the condition as the 'shaking palsy'.

pasteurization a process of removing germs from liquids by heating, named after the French chemist Louis Pasteur (1822-95).

pestilence an EPIDEMIC of a serious DISEASE, typically infectious.

pinta a non-venereal form of syphilis which is transmitted by skin contact, often between children living in conditions of poor hygiene.

pneumonia a DISEASE of or pertaining to the lungs, often caused by BACTERIAL infections.

psychotic a psychotic episode usually refers to a profound mental aberration marked by loss of all sense of reality.

quarantine a term (meaning '40 days') first used by Italians to describe a period of isolation of individuals who had been exposed to an infectious DISEASE, with the aim of preventing its further spread.

relapsing fever a DISEASE transmitted by lice (louse-borne relapsing fever) or ticks (tick-borne relapsing fever).

rheumatic fever an inflammatory DISEASE which may develop after a streptococcal infection and can affect many parts of the body including the heart, nervous system, joints and skin. In the past it was a common cause of death in children and remains a leading cause of heart DISEASE in the developing world today.

rickets a DISEASE characterized by spinal deformity, twisting and bowing of legs, caused by a deficiency of vitamin D - which may be lacking in the diet - or inadequate exposure to sunlight.

rubella an infectious viral DISEASE, usually in children, known for its red rash. It is also called German measles, possibly because it was first described and identified by German physicians in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

sanatorium an institution or place of refuge for the care of people suffering from CHRONIC DISEASES such as tuberculosis.

scarlet fever a common BACTERIAL (streptococcal) DISEASE, especially in children, which is typified by a red rash and sore throat.

somnolent sleepy.

tracheostomy See tracheotomy.

tracheotomy a surgical procedure performed on the neck to open a direct airway through an incision in the trachea (windpipe).

tubercles various small anatomic lumps, including those which develop in the lungs as a result of infection by the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* BACTERIUM.

vaccination See vaccine.

vaccine in the 19th century, the term vaccination was limited to the INOCULATION of a preparation derived from cowpox that protected people from smallpox. It was later extended more widely to describe similar measures taken to protect people against other DISEASES.

vector an intermediate 'vehicle', such as an animal, that is the carrier of an infectious DISEASE or an insect capable of transferring an infectious agent from one host to another.

virus a group of very small infective agents causing many DISEASES, including the common cold, influenza and AIDS.

WHO See World Health Organization.

whooping cough a highly CONTAGIOUS BACTERIAL DISEASE also known as pertussis, which is accompanied by a violent cough (that sounds like a 'whoop') and can be fatal.

World Health Organization established in 1948 with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Health Organization (the WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN), acting as the directing and co-ordinating authority on international health.

yaws a BACTERIAL infection of the skin, bones and joints, related to the organism which causes syphilis.