

While common tooth decay doesn't cause plague, some historical research suggests that in the past, **severe dental infections may have been a pathway for plague bacteria to enter the bloodstream**. The bacteria that cause plague (*Y.pestis*) can cause bubonic plague by infecting lymph nodes, and if left untreated, can spread through the bloodstream, a more lethal form called septicemic plague. This septicemic form can be fatal and can lead to organ damage, but it does not originate from the typical tooth cavities and plaque we see today. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

Historical context

- In the past, particularly during the Black Death, archaeologists have found DNA evidence of the plague bacteria in the teeth of victims.
- This evidence is believed to represent a past historical connection between a tooth infection and the plague's spread. [1, 2]

Modern-day dental infections

- Dental infections from cavities can lead to serious complications like sepsis if they enter the bloodstream, but this is different from the plague. [4, 5, 7]
- Sepsis from a tooth infection is a severe and potentially fatal condition that requires immediate medical attention. [4, 5, 8]
- Symptoms can include high fever, chills, rapid heart rate, confusion, and shortness of breath. [4, 5, 8]
- It is crucial to see a doctor if you suspect a dental infection has spread, as prompt treatment is necessary to prevent severe outcomes like organ failure. [4, 5]

AI responses may include mistakes.

[1] <https://www.nature.com/articles/sj.bdj.2015.209>

[2] <https://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/ancient-teeth-offer-new-insight-black-death-emerged-spread-globally-rcna33329>

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bubonic_plague

[4] <https://www.brownroaddental.com/can-a-tooth-infection-spread-to-your-blood/>

[5] <https://www.elitefamilydentalky.com/how-do-you-know-if-a-tooth-infection-has-spread-to-your-blood/>

[6] <https://www.dentistspring.com/are-cavities-contagious.html>

[7] <https://www.mydental.com/how-long-until-tooth-infection-kills-you/>

[8] <https://www.endsepsis.org/sepsis-and-dental-infections/>