

Source: [KBiologyMasterIndex](#)

## 1 | Overview of Human Diseases

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#flo #disorganized

**Disease** is an abnormal condition that causes impairment in/loss of function of an organism (a.k.a. decreased fitness) that is not due to immediate external injury.

- What causes human disease?
  - Infectious agents
  - Deficiency disorders
  - Heritable factors
  - Physiological disorders (immunodeficiency, autoimmune disorders, allergies, etc.)

### 1.1 | Congenital vs. Acquired disease

Congenital diseases => diseases present at birth due to DNA abnormalities / pregnancy pathological issues

Acquired diseases => diseases that begin during lifetime, including...

- Microorganism invasion => “infectious diseases”
- Autoimmune reaction
- Nutrient deficiency
- Mechanical wear
- Ingestion of noxious chemicals

### Infectious diseases actually smaller on the causes of death in the US

- Heart disease => wear + deficiency
- Cancer => heritable + DNA
- Unintentional injuries => not a disease
- Chronic respiratory disease => wear
- Stroke => not a disease
- Alzheimer disease => wear
- Diabetes => autoimmune, nutrient, wear
- Influenza <= **here, finally, an infectious disease.**

### 1.2 | Disease causing agents

- **Protozoan** => single-celled eukaryotes
- **Fungal** => single/multi-celled eukaryotes
- **Bacteria** => single-celled prokaryotes
- **Viral** => acellular parasitic infectious agent
- **Helminths** => multicellular worms
- **Prions** => acellular misfolded proteins
- **Viroids** => infectious nucleic acids w/o protein coat to make virus

### 1.3 | **Pathogenicity + Virulence**

**Pathogenicity** => relative capacity to cause disease

- Non-pathogenic agents => no disease
- Primary pathogens => yes disease
- Opportunistic pathogens => yes disease only when it can, for instance, in immunocompromised individuals

**Virulence** => numerical measures for pathogenicity

- Measured experimentally with LD50 — amount 50 percent