

## Old Medical Terms

A collection of old medical terms that were used on many documents, including death certificates. Many entries have been submitted by LCGS members and definitions verified using: *A To Zak, A Comprehensive Dictionary for Genealogists & Historians, Third Edition, 1995*, by Barbara Jean Evans and *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, Edition 14 Illustrated, 1981*, Edited by Clayton L. Thomas, M.D., M.P.H.

Ablepsy	Blindness
Ague	Malarial Fever
American plague	Yellow Fever
Anasarca	Generalized massive edema
Aphonia	Laryngitis
Apoplexy	Paralysis due to stroke
Atrophy	Wasting away or diminishing in size
Bad Blood	Syphilis
Bilious fever	Typhoid, malaria, hepatitis or elevated temperature and bile emesis
Biliousness	Jaundice associated with liver disease
Black fever	Acute infection with high temperature and dark red skin lesions and high rate
Black plague or death	Bubonic plague
Black pox	Black small pox
Black vomit	Vomiting old black blood due to ulcers or yellow fever
Blackwater fever	Dark urine associated with high temperature
Blood poisoning	Bacterial infection; septicemia
Bloody flux	Bloody stools
Bloody sweats	Sweating sickness
Bone shave	Sciatica
Brain fever	Meningitis
Breakbone	Dengue fever
Bright's disease	Chronic inflammatory disease of kidneys
Bronze John	Yellow fever
Cachexy	Malnutrition
Caduceus	Subject to falling sickness or epilepsy
Camp fever	Typhus
Canine madness	Rabies
Canker	Ulceration of mouth or lips or herpes simplex
Catarrh	Associated with the common cold. An inflammation of the mucous membranes; runny nose; sinusitis
Chin cough	Whooping cough
Cholera	Acute severe contagious diarrhea with intestinal lining sloughing
Congestive chills	Malaria
Consumption	Tuberculosis
Coryza	A cold
Costiveness	Constipation
Cramp colic	Appendicitis
Crop sickness	Overextended stomach
Decrepitude	Feebleness due to old age

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Deplumation	Tumor of the eyelids which causes hair loss
Diary fever	A fever that lasts one day
Diphtheria	Contagious disease of the throat
Dry Bellyache	Lead poisoning
Eel thing	Erysipelas
Elephantiasis	A form of leprosy
Falling sickness	Epilepsy
Fatty liver	Cirrhosis of liver
French pox	Syphilis
Great pox	Syphilis
Green fever	Anemia
Grocer's itch	Skin disease caused by mites in sugar or flour
Grippe	Influenza
Heart sickness	Condition caused by loss of salt from body
Hip gout	Osteomyelitis
Horrors	Delirium tremens
Hydrothorax	Dropsy in chest
Infantile paralysis	Polio
Jail fever	Typhus
King's evil	Tuberculosis of neck and lymph glands
Kruchhusten	Whooping cough
Lagrippe	Influenza
Long sickness	Tuberculosis
Lues disease	Syphilis
Lues venera	Venereal disease
Lung fever	Pneumonia
Lung sickness	Tuberculosis
Malignant sore throat	Diphtheria
Mania	Insanity
Marasmust	Progressive wasting away of body
Membranous croup	Diphtheria
Miasma	Poisonous vapors thoughts to infect the air
Milk fever	Disease from drinking contaminated milk
Milk sickness	Disease from milk of cattle which had eaten poisonous weeds
Mormal	Gangrene
Morphew	Scurvy blisters on the body
Mortification	Gangrene of necrotic tissue
Myelitis	Inflammation of the spine
Myocarditis	Inflammation of the heart muscles
Necrosis	Mortification of bones or tissue
Nephosis	Kidney degeneration
Nephritis	Inflammation of the kidneys
Nervous prostration	Extreme exhaustion from inability to control physical and mental activities
Neuralgia	described as discomfort, such as "headache" was neuralgia in the head
Nostalgia	Homesickness

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Palsy	Paralysis or uncontrolled movement of controlled muscle - often used as a cause of death
Paroxysm	Convulsion
Pemphigus	Skin disease of watery blisters
Pericarditis	Inflammation of the heart
Peripneumonia	Inflammation of the lungs
Peritonitis	Inflammation of abdominal area
Petechial fever	Fever characterized by skin spotting
Phitiriasis	Lice infiltration
Phitisis	Chronic wasting away or a name for tuberculosis
Plague	An acute febrile highly infectious disease with a high fatality rate
Pleurisy	Any pain in the chest area with each breath
Podagra	Gout
Poliomyelitis	Polio
Potter's asthma	Fibroid phthisis
Puerpal exhaustion	Death due to child birth
Puerperal fever	Elevated temperature after giving birth to an infant
Puerperal exhaustion	Death due to child birth
Phthiriasis	Lice infection
Podagra	Gout
Pott's disease	Tuberculosis of spine
Quinsy	Tonsillitis
Remitting fever	Malaria
Rickets	Disease of skeletal system
Rose cold	Hay fever
Scirrhus	Cancerous tumors
Scotomy	Dizziness, nausea and dimness of sight
Scrivener's palsy	Writer's cramp
Screws	Rheumatism
Scumpox	Skin disease, impetigo
Ship fever	Typhus
Sloes	Milk sickness
Spotted fever	Either typhus or meningitis
Sprue	Tropical disease characterized by intestinal disorder and sore throat
St. Anthony's fire	Affected skin areas are bright red
St. Vitas Dance	Ceaseless occurrence of rapid complex involuntary jerking movements
Stomatitis	Inflammation of the mouth
Stranger's fever	Yellow fever
Swamp sickness	Could be malaria, typhoid or encephalitis
Sweating sickness	Infectious and fatal disease common to the United Kingdom in the 15 <sup>th</sup> century
Thrush	Childhood disease characterized by spots on mouth, lips and throat
Trench mouth	Painful ulcers found along gum line; caused by poor nutrition and hygiene
Variola	Smallpox
Viper's Dance	St. Vitus Dance

## Old Medical Terms

White swelling  
Winter fever  
Yellowjacket

Tuberculosis of the bone  
Pneumonia  
Yellow fever