

Life At Sea: Sores, Scabs, and Scurvy Diseases

The following are some common diseases that sailors had during sea voyages.

Dysentery - chronic diseases of the large intestines from an amoeba.
symptoms - diarrhea with blood and severe abdominal cramps.

Malaria - fever from a parasite transmitted by mosquitoes.
symptoms - fever, chills, and sweating. Untreated the attacks continue to recur. Treatment was quinine, which was toxic to the protozoan that caused the malaria.

Malnutrition - the lack of proper vitamins in diet.
symptoms - Lack of energy, sleepiness, vulnerability to colds and flu. Can be fatal.

Syphilis - infectious disease caused by bacteria transmitted by sexual contact.
symptoms - sores appear on infected area, after six weeks a rash appears. Fever, sores, and headaches continue until 12 weeks. The last stage can last 20 to 30 years. Internal organs will be infected, the brain or blood vessels enlarge, and the person dies.

Scurvy - disease from a deficiency of vitamin C.
symptoms - weakness, spongy and inflamed gums, loose teeth, and ruptured blood vessels. If not reversed will eventually result in death.

Sea Sickness - being off balance on board ship.
symptoms - Upset stomach, vomiting, and headache. Can cause dehydration. Usually goes away after a few weeks at sea.

Typhus - contracted from body lice.
symptoms - 10 days after being bitten: high fever, pain in the muscles, headaches. After 5 days a dark-red rash appears, the second week the victim becomes delirious and dies. If the victim survives the first 2 weeks, he or she will recover.