Plague

The above image shows the Yersinia pestis bacteria (in yellow) — which causes plague — on the spines of a flea (in purple).

Yes, plague is alive and well in the United States, but thanks to modern medicine, it's highly unlikely we'll see a repeat of the Black Death anytime soon.

Today, the infection, which is caused by the bacterium Yersinia pestis, is easily treated with antibiotics, Barron said. It's only when an infection goes unidentified that it can come deadly, she said.

Plague infections come in two forms. One form is the bubonic plague, which causes the large, dark swollen lymph nodes (known as "bubos") that are commonly associated with the disease, Barron said. These will occur close to the area where a person got bit by a flea and are hard to miss, she said.