

7-year-old Colo. girl recovers from bubonic plague

September 5 2012



Seven-year-old Sierra Jane Downing from Pagosa Springs, Colo., smiles during a news conference about her recovery from bubonic plague at the Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children at Presbyterian/St. Luke's Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2012, in Denver. It is believed Downing caught the bubonic plague from burying a dead squirrel. (AP Photo/Jack Dempsey)

(AP)—The parents of 7-year-old Sierra Jane Downing thought she had the flu when she felt sick days after camping in southwest Colorado.

An emergency room doctor who saw her for a [seizure](#) and 107-degree

fever wasn't sure what was wrong either.

The girl was then flown to Denver, where a pediatric doctor at Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children got the first inkling that she had bubonic plague. The doctor figured it out using Sierra Jane's symptoms, a history of where she'd been and an online journal search.

The bubonic plague hasn't been confirmed in a human in Colorado since 2006. [Federal health officials](#) say an average of seven cases are reported in the U.S. each year.

Doctors said Wednesday Sierra Jane is recovering and could go home within a week.

Darcy Downing says her daughter may have been infected by insects near a dead squirrel she wanted to bury.

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Citation: 7-year-old Colo. girl recovers from bubonic plague (2012, September 5) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-09-year-old-colo-girl-recovers-bubonic.html>

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