

Boy Dies After Eating Groundhog Infected With Bubonic Plague

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A boy has died in Kyrgyzstan after eating barbequed groundhog infected with the bubonic plague.

The meat was prepared in the Sary-Dzhaz gorge on Lake Issyk-Kul's southern shore, Interfax reported Monday.

The 15-year-old died Thursday, but until now doctors had been unable to identify the exact cause of death.

"While fighting for the life of the teenager, doctors gave the boy 17 different drugs which made it difficult to make an accurate diagnosis," Kyrgyzstan's Health Ministry said.

Doctors identified a plague microbe during biological tests, and their diagnosis was later confirmed by experts from the republic's Quarantine and Especially Dangerous Infections

Center.

Over 100 people, including 19 doctors, were in contact with the boy over the last few days. All of them have been put in quarantine and are undergoing preventative treatment, Itar-Tass reported.

Specialists have been dispatched from Bishkek to help prevent an outbreak occurring and residents from the Ak-Suisky district, where the boy lived, are getting vaccinations.

Groundhogs are a natural carrier of the deadly disease and were targeted for extermination in the Soviet Union, but the Kyrgyz authorities stopped poisoning them from 1982 onward due to the costs involved, the report said.

A mass extermination of groundhogs will be carried out in Sary-Dzhaz and attempts will be made to determine how much of the territory has been infected.

The authorities are looking for the people who cooked and shared the groundhog with the boy.

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