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160 Quarantined After Plague Death in Kyrgyzstan

By The Moscow Times

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BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — Four people have been hospitalized and 160 quarantined after a 15-year-old boy who ate marmot meat died of the bubonic plague last week, the Kyrgyz Health Ministry said Wednesday.

The ministry said the boy told medics he spent the previous week camping in the mountains where he had eaten barbecued marmot, a large ground squirrel that typically lives in mountainous areas.

The Health Ministry established a quarantine in parts of the mountainous northeast, but said there was no risk of an epidemic.

Four residents in the boy's village were hospitalized Wednesday after complaining of fever, though none had contact with the boy. A high fever is a common symptom of many diseases, such as the flu or measles.

There are several thousand cases of bubonic plague every year worldwide. People usually catch the disease after being bitten by an infected insect or animal or coming into close contact with an infected animal, like hunters removing an animal's skin.

Bubonic plague is the most common type of plague and causes painful swollen lymph nodes called buboes. The disease swept across Europe in the Middle Ages, killing millions. These days, the disease is easily treated with antibiotics and can be cured if caught early.

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