

# Denver Zoo monkey dies of plague

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A hooded capuchin monkey at the Denver Zoo has died of the plague, which officials suspect was transmitted by a squirrel.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's lab confirmed the 8-year-old monkey contracted the plague from a dead squirrel in the outdoor pen, although 17 other monkeys in the enclosure tested negative for the disease, the Rocky Mountain News reported.

State epidemiologist John Pape both said the risk to humans was extremely low and avoiding contact with squirrels was the best way to avoid infection.

While plague is common in prairie dogs in the Denver area, the recent outbreak is the first since 1968 to be in squirrels in the city.

Officials set up a telephone number for residents to report dead squirrels, and 23 of the first 144 tested were positive for plague infection, the report said.

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