Europeans infected Native Americans with diseases through trade and war.

Native Americans infected the next generation of colonists who did not grow up in disease-ridden Europe.

European settlers experienced smallpox as children in Europe, and therefore, many had immunity.

Native Americans had zero immunity to European diseases. They lived away from swamps, so malaria and yellow fever did not decimate them like smallpox.

Colonists may not have fully understood germs but they made early connections between health and cleanliness. The Acts of the 1600s show their attempt to clean up the city. However, these actions did not prevent the arrival of viruses by ship.

After the yellow fever outbreak of 1706, the legislature cracked down on ships entering the harbor without a certificate of health. Six doctors checked ship passengers for illness and the pest house quarantined the sick for 10-20 days. The effort proved successful when an outbreak of smallpox in 1771 did not get past the pest house into the city.