Man first thought disease to be punishment from God

Hippocrates 500 BC  Disease brought on by foul vapors (miasma). Malaria for instance.

Aristotle 350 BC  Taught Alexander the Great to boil drinking water & bury feces to prevent disease.

Fracastorius 1546 (1478-1553)
Theory of contagion: disease infection can be caused by minute bodies (“germs”) capable of self-replication, transmitted from patient to new host. Named syphilis?

Leeuwenhoek 1670s improved microscope

Agostino Bassi 1834
First to show that a microorganism could cause disease in case of a fungal disease of silkworms (muscardine): contagious and could be transmitted naturally by direct contact or infected food, or experimentally by means of a pin previously sterilized in a flame

Oliver Wendle Holmes 1843
Noted that it was safer to give birth at home than in hospital. Postulated something present in hospital is cause (nosocomial disease)

M.J. Berkeley 1845
Showed Irish potato blight caused by a fungus

Ignaz Semmelweis 1848 (1818-1865)
Proposed iatrogenic disease.
In charge of lying-in hospital in Vienna. Noted high puerperal fever death rate:
Ward II midwives = 3%,
Ward I, medical faculty = ~10%.
Phys. friend died of autopsy wound, S&S same as puerperal fever.
Proposed etiology: “cadaveric particles.” Smell not removed by hand washing, but “chloride of lime” wash (calcium hypochlorite: Ca(OCl)₂ did, rate drop: 12.4% to 1.27%. (see graph)

John Snow 1854 (1813-1858)
deduced Broad Street Pump contamination caused cholera epidemic in London. (Epidemiology)

Joseph Lister 1860s
(1827-1912) (p 14)
Introduced use of antiseptic during surgery:
phenol in surgical dressings and sprayed into the air. Wound infections dropped dramatically, thus due to bacteria.