

Histoplasmosis

WHAT IS HISTOPLASMOSIS?

- Histoplasmosis is a lung infection, or pneumonia, caused by breathing in spores of the fungus *Histoplasma* from the environment
- In the United States, *Histoplasma* mainly lives in soil in the central and eastern states, but it can live in other parts of the country as well
- Activities that involve plant matter or disturb soil, particularly soil that contains bird or bat droppings, can increase risk for histoplasmosis

HOW IS HISTOPLASMOSIS TRANSMITTED?

Histoplasmosis is caused by breathing in fungal spores from *Histoplasma*, a fungus that lives in soil. It also spreads in bird and bat droppings that mix in soil. Histoplasmosis does not spread between people or between people and pets (cats and dogs).

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HISTOPLASMOSIS INFECTION?

Some cases may be asymptomatic. Symptoms usually appear 3 to 17 days after breathing in the fungus and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Fatigue (extreme tiredness)
- Malaise
- Headache
- Chest pain
- Body aches

HOW DO I PREVENT HISTOPLASMOSIS CONTAMINATION?

- Eliminate exposure to bird or bat droppings
- Avoid soil disruption or wear a N-95 mask when:
 - cleaning chicken coops
 - exploring caves
 - renovating or tearing down old buildings
 - gardening, landscaping, or yardwork



Histoplasmosis is often misdiagnosed or diagnosed late because the symptoms are similar to more common pneumonias.

TREATMENT FOR HISTOPLASMOSIS

Symptoms sometimes go away on their own without treatment. Prescription antifungal medication is needed to treat:

- Severe or chronic (long-term) lung infections
- Infections that spread to other parts of the body and meningitis

ANIMAL IMPACT

Pets, particularly cats, can get histoplasmosis, but it does not spread between animals and people. Many cats and dogs exposed to *Histoplasma* never get sick. Symptoms of histoplasmosis in pets are similar to those in people, including cough, lack of energy and weight loss.



IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AND ARE SICK WITH HISTOPLASMOSIS, CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER RIGHT AWAY!

All information was provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/histoplasmosis/about/index.html> Updated April 24, 2024



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