

For more information, go online and research blastomycosis, or follow the links listed below:

Dogs

PetMD.com Search: Blastomycosis

The St. Ignace News

stignaceneews.com/articles/best-defense-for-caring-for-dogs-is-watchful-eye/

Humans and Dogs

Merck Manual merckmanuals.com/home/infections/fungal-infections/blastomycosis

Emedicine emedicinehealth.com/blastomycosis

Centers for Disease Control

cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/blastomycosis

Michigan Physician Listing, By City*

lifescrpt.com/doctor-directory/condition/b-blastomycosis-mi.aspx

*Physicians who treat human blastomycosis infection

Additionally, consultation with the following providers and/or researchers is recommended:

Dennis J Baumgardner, MD (414) 219-5191

Focus is on environmental sources of the fungus.

Clinton Groover, DVM (906) 647-6512
groover@msu.edu

Carol A. Kauffman, MD ckauff@umich.edu

Daniel K. Langlois, DVM (517) 353-5420
langlo21@cvm.msu.edu

Dr. Alfred Legendre (865) 974-8387
alegedr@utk.edu

Dr. L. Joe Wheat jlwheat@miravistalabs.com

MiraVista Diagnostics, Indianapolis, IN

www.miravistalabs.com



The Les Cheneaux Community Foundation has established a fund specifically to help raise awareness and support research of Blastomycosis.

If you are interested in donating to the **Blastomycosis Field of Interest Fund** please make your check out to LCCF and earmark/memo it for **Blastomycosis**

Donations may be mailed to:
Les Cheneaux Community Foundation
PO Box 249
Cedarville, MI, 49719

www.lescheneauxcommunityfoundation.org
Home > Projects > Blastomycosis Info

Updated February 2020

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BLASTOMYCOSIS

A rare but significant health risk to both humans and pets.

Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula is a high-risk area, with the Les Cheneaux Islands region and Drummond Island already identified as high incidence areas.

The disease is very serious but treatable, so early diagnosis is crucial. This brochure is designed to provide basic information on the nature of the disease, its signs and symptoms, treatment, and links to more indepth information.



What is blastomycosis?

Blastomycosis is a fungal infection that can lead to serious and sometimes fatal disease. Dogs and humans are most commonly at risk, although other animals are also susceptible. The fungus grows in soils, especially soils that are very moist with a high organic content and an acid pH. Under certain conditions the fungus forms spores that can be inhaled, especially when the soil in which it is growing is disturbed. Once the lungs are infected, the fungus can affect other parts of the body, including the eyes, skin, genitourinary tract, bones, and joints.

Blastomycosis causes a variety of symptoms and can lead to serious illness and death.

Blastomycosis has been identified in various regions of the U.S. and Canada, especially Michigan, Wisconsin, the Ohio River Valley, Southeastern USA, and Canada's Georgian Bay.

Certain areas of Michigan's Upper Peninsula are regarded as high-incidence "hot spots". Residents of, and visitors to, these areas should become well informed about this threat.

To date, blastomycosis is an under-reported disease and still not enough is understood about it. *Blastomycosis is a reportable disease for humans but not for animals in Michigan.* Therefore, increased knowledge, reporting, collaborative efforts, and support of research are critical to combat this problem.

Current research indicates that blastomycosis is not contagious, with the very rare exception being an infected skin lesion making direct contact with broken skin or mucous membranes.

Signs, Symptoms & Diagnosis

In its early stages blastomycosis can present a variety of symptoms, which can vary from humans to dogs. You might see:

Canines:

Most commonly infected, but not restricted to, are younger, sporting dogs.

- Fever
- Loss of Appetite
- Weight Loss
- Eye Discharge
- Eye Inflammation, especially the iris
- Difficulty Breathing
- Compromised Coordination
- Skin Lesions
- Limping or Lameness with no apparent cause

Humans:

- Flu-like Symptoms
- In humans, about half of blastomycosis infections do not result in symptoms or illness

Some of these symptoms are commonly seen in other illnesses, and diagnosis as blastomycosis is often missed. **Effective treatment of blastomycosis depends on an early diagnosis.**

If you suspect blastomycosis, consult your veterinarian or physician and mention your concerns to determine if testing is appropriate.

Current clinical blastomycosis tests are not always accurate, so follow-up evaluation should be discussed. If your health care provider is not familiar with blastomycosis, ask that they consult with someone who is. **You may have to be insistent to have the clinician run blastomycosis tests.**

Help and Treatment

There are just a few medications currently used to treat blastomycosis. These include Variconazole, Itraconazole (Sporanox) or other "azole" drugs, Amphotericin B and other similar drugs. **Effective treatment relies on early diagnosis and intervention by your vet or physician.**

Prevention

Currently there is no vaccine available to prevent blastomycosis, so we support research efforts to help find one. The best ways to limit possible exposures are:

- Learning what areas and conditions may be likely to harbor the fungus
- Avoid digging in or disturbing high risk soils
- Avoid rotting wood

If digging or excavation in affected areas must be done, wearing a surgical mask may be advisable, and keeping dogs, cats, or people with compromised immune systems away from this area is highly suggested.

Soil Testing

Soil testing can be accomplished in research facilities; consumer tests are presently unavailable.

Please remember, blastomycosis is a genuine health concern in our region. While it may be more of a threat to our dogs and other pets, it is also very dangerous, and can be deadly, for humans if not detected and treated early enough.

It can best be dealt with by:

- Becoming well-informed
- Sharing information with others
- Supporting efforts to make the medical community and public better-educated about this disease
- Supporting research