

BLASTOMYCOSIS



Blastomycosis is a fungal infection caused by *Blastomyces*. About half of people infected will not have any symptoms. People with a weakened immune system or a chronic illness are more likely to show symptoms. Blastomycosis is found throughout Wisconsin and surrounding states of the Midwest, especially those in the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys.



How is it spread?

- ▶ *Blastomyces* may be found in the dirt near standing water.
- ▶ You can get blastomycosis when you breathe in air around dirt that has been disturbed. Pay special attention when dirt is:
 - ▶ Near a water source and has been disturbed.
 - ▶ Moved by gardening, camping, hunting, hiking, riding all-terrain vehicles, or clearing brush.
 - ▶ Near an excavation or construction site.
- ▶ Dogs can be infected with *Blastomyces*, but cannot spread it to people.
- ▶ Blastomycosis cannot be spread person-to-person.



What are the signs and symptoms?

- ▶ Fever or chills
- ▶ Cough
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Chest or back pain
- ▶ Feeling very tired
- ▶ Skin sores that may look crusted and grow in size



What are the treatment options?

- ▶ People are usually treated with antifungal medicine. The medication needs to be taken for several months.
- ▶ Antibiotics do not work for blastomycosis.



How can it be prevented?

- ▶ The best way to avoid becoming very sick is to talk to your doctor when experiencing any symptoms.
- ▶ Because no environmental testing is available to identify *Blastomyces*, you may want to avoid activities that disrupt dirt in wooded areas or at the water's edge.

