BLASTOMYCOSIS AND PETS

Blastomycosis is a rare, but potentially deadly fungal infection caused by *Blastomyces dermatitidis*. Half of the people and animals who are infected will not show symptoms. People and animals with a weakened immune system are more likely to have severe symptoms. *B. dermatitidis* is found in Wisconsin and throughout the Midwest. Treatment requires several months of an antifungal medicine.

**What causes it?**
- Blastomycosis may develop when the fungal spores are inhaled from the environment and the lungs become infected.
  - *Blastomyces* is most commonly found in moist soil, riverbanks, and low swampy areas. The spores can also become airborne when the dirt is disturbed.
  - Dogs and cats develop blastomycosis because they are low to the ground. Sniffing or digging in the soil may increase their risk of exposure to the fungal spores.
  - Blastomycosis does not spread among humans or animals.

**What are the symptoms in pets?**
- Skin sores (especially on the face or paws)
- Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath
- Unexplained limping
- Difficulty seeing
- Loss of appetite or weight loss

**What are the symptoms in humans?**
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest or back pain
- Fever
- Crusted skin sores

**Can a person get blastomycosis from their pet?**
- Blastomycosis cannot spread directly from your pet to you.
- Infection in your pet could indicate an area near you is contaminated with the fungus.
- Blastomycosis is most commonly found in dogs, but can affect other animals.

**How can it be prevented?**
- There is no vaccine available.
- Limit activities that disrupt soil at the water’s edge, landscaped areas, or wooded terrain.
- Since there is no environmental testing available, monitor yourself and your pet for symptoms.
  - Talk to a veterinarian immediately if your pet experiences symptoms of blastomycosis.