

Understanding Blastomyces

BLASTOMYCES: A FUNGI IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Fungi are all around us eating dead stuff & turning it into nutrients for the soil.

Blastomyces is a fungus that grows naturally in northern Ontario.

Also Manitoba, Québec & eastern USA

Its preferred habitat is not well understood.

Has been found in soil, wood, organics, on shorelines in forests & in yards.

Like all fungi, Blastomyces produces microscopic spores that get carried by wind to make new fungi.


It seems to be rare and short-lived in the environment.

There are millions of fungal spores in the air that we inhale without any ill effects.

BLASTOMYCOSIS IN HUMANS: A FUNGAL INFECTION CAUSED BY BLASTOMYCES

- Some people who inhale Blastomyces spores get sick with blastomycosis.
- Blastomyces doesn't need to live inside a human or other mammals. Infection is accidental.
- Blastomycosis cannot be transmitted person to person.
- Symptoms include cough, fever, night sweats, chest pain. Blastomycosis can be diagnosed from saliva (sputum test).
- It can travel through the blood to infect other organs and can present as skin lesions.

Sometimes a scratch from something with Blastomyces on it can cause a blastomycosis infection.


Treatment is with an anti-fungal medicine with a 95% recovery rate.
Early diagnosis is important.

WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW?

1. Blastomyces can't be controlled in the environment.
2. Climate change could increase its growth & range.
3. Know the symptoms, see a doctor & ask to be tested for blastomycosis.
4. Share blastomycosis info with friends & family.
5. Awareness & early diagnosis is key.

