

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.




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

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

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 humans 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.

