



Blastomycosis in Minnesota

What is blastomycosis?

Blastomycosis is a disease caused by the fungus, *Blastomyces dermatitidis*, which grows in moist soils and in wooded areas along waterways and swamps. The *Blastomyces* fungus is found in Northern Minnesota and along the St. Croix River in Eastern Minnesota.

Who gets blastomycosis?

People and animals such as dogs and cats can get blastomycosis. In Minnesota, an average of 33 people and 72 dogs and cats are diagnosed with blastomycosis each year.

In people, the risk of infection is higher when working or playing in wooded areas along waterways. Being around excavation work can also increase the risk of becoming sick with blastomycosis.

How do you get blastomycosis?

A blastomycosis infection can happen when people breathe in the *Blastomyces* fungal spores. When the fungus is inhaled, it settles in the lungs and later spreads to other parts of the body. Blastomycosis does not spread from animals-to-people or from person-to-person.

What are the symptoms?

In people

Blastomycosis in people normally causes a lung infection that begins with a fever and dry cough. The lung infection may lead to weight loss, chest pain, and a constant cough. In rare cases, the infection may spread to the skin, bone, or other organs. Of the people who get a blastomycosis infection, about 68 percent are hospitalized.

In dogs

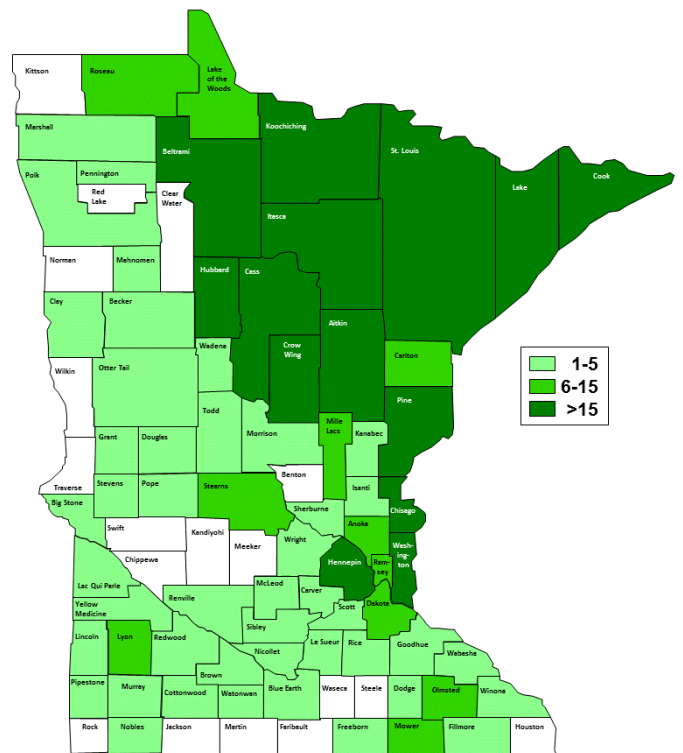
In dogs, the most common symptoms are skin lesions, limping, loss of appetite, weight loss, cough, breathing problems, and blindness.

What should I do if a family member or pet has these symptoms?

See your health care provider or veterinarian as soon as symptoms appear. Let them know if you have been to an area where blastomycosis is common. The good news is that a severe infection can usually be prevented through early diagnosis and treatment.

Human and Animal Blastomycosis Cases in Minnesota by County, 1999-2014

The map represents 1,175 cases (332 humans and 843 animals) from 1999-2014.



For more information, contact:
Minnesota Department of Health
Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention and Control Division
651-201-5414, 877-676-5414
health.mn.gov/divs/idepc/diseases/blastomycosis/index.html