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Date: July 17, 2012

To: Medical Providers

Administration & Finance  
(402) 444-7216

From: Douglas County Health Department

Emergency Response &  
Preparedness  
(402) 444-7213

Subject: Update on the Outbreak of Histoplasmosis at Hummel Park Day Camp

Epidemiology  
(402) 444-7214

The Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) continues to investigate an outbreak of histoplasmosis at the Hummel Park Day Camp. Of the 32 counselors and staff, 19 reported illness. Seventeen were laboratory confirmed and two reported symptoms consistent with histoplasmosis, but had negative test results. This resulted in an attack rate among counselors and staff of 59%. Ages of ill individuals ranged from 18 to 23 years. The most commonly reported symptoms were headache, chest pain, myalgias, fever, shortness of breath, fatigue and cough. Camp counselors participated in high risk activities such as digging of fire pits, raking leaves, and cleaning animal droppings (including bat and bird). These activities could have resulted in the aerosolization and inhalation of *Histoplasmosis capsulatum* spores.

Food and Drink  
(402) 444-7480

Health Promotion  
(402) 444-7475

Lead Prevention Program  
(402) 444-7825

Of 137 campers whose parent(s) responded to a DCHD online survey, two had laboratory confirmed histoplasmosis and 12 others reported illness consistent with histoplasmosis. Ages ranged from 8 to 14 years. The likely source of the camper's infections was identified as concentrated areas of contaminated soil directly beneath pavilions where bats had been roosting.

Public Health Clinic &  
Immunizations  
(402) 444-6163

Histoplasmosis is caused by a fungus called *Histoplasma capsulatum*, which is found in soil contaminated by bird or bat droppings. Digging, raking, or cleaning animal droppings (including bird and bat) can stir up dust and cause the spores to become aerosolized. Inhalation of these aerosolized spores can cause infection. Most people who are exposed to the spores do not become ill. Furthermore, the fungus cannot be transmitted person-to-person or from animals to people. Potential complications of severe disease may include pericarditis, arthritis, erythema nodosum, pneumonia and progressive disseminated infection. Illness is more likely to be severe in immunocompromised individuals.

STD Control  
(402) 444-7750

Sanitation Control  
(402) 444-7481

Sanitary Engineering  
(402) 444-7485

WIC  
(402) 444-1770

Please maintain a high index of suspicion for histoplasmosis in patients experiencing persistent symptoms who may have attended Hummel Park Day Camp. MiraVista Diagnostics in Indianapolis, IN continues to collaborate with DCHD to provide testing for any child who attended day camp at Hummel Park this year. Appropriate tests are urine and serum antigens (*Histoplasma* quantitative antigen EIA). Please call DCHD at 402-444-7214 to arrange for laboratory testing of your patient.

*Civic Center Location*  
1819 Farnam Street, H01  
Health Data  
(402) 546-0847

Vital Statistics  
(402) 444-7205

Treatment usually is unnecessary if the patient is asymptomatic or has mild symptoms, even if they have a positive test for histoplasmosis.

*Health Center Location*  
4102 Woolworth Av.  
Laboratory Services  
(402) 444-7496

Individuals should be reminded that *Histoplasma* is endemic to Nebraska and should be informed of the risk of histoplasmosis when performing any activities that stir up dust or cause exposure to bird or bat droppings. People who participate in these activities should be advised to wear masks to prevent inhalation of dust and to change their clothes after participating in these activities.

For additional information, please visit: <http://www.douglascountyhealth.com/disease-a-immunization/histoplasmosis> or call 402-444-7214.