

Sporotrichosis **FACTSHEET**

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What is Sporotrichosis?

Sporotrichosis is a fungal infection, usually of the skin, often of an extremity, that begins as a nodule (lump). As the nodule grows, lymph nodes in the area become firm and cord like and form a series of nodules. Sometimes these nodules soften and become ulcers.

Who gets Sporotrichosis?

Anyone can get the disease but people exposed to thorny plants, sphagnum moss, or baled hay contaminated with the fungus are at increased risk. There have been multiple cases of sporotrichosis seen in nursery workers handling sphagnum moss, rose gardeners, children playing on baled hay, and greenhouse workers handling barberry thorns contaminated by the fungus.

What are the symptoms of Sporotrichosis?

The first symptom is usually a small painless bump resembling an insect bite. It can be red, pink, or purple in color. The bump (nodule) usually appears on the finger, hand or arm where the fungus first enters through a break in the skin. This is followed by one or more additional bumps (nodules) that open and may resemble boils. Eventually lesions look like open sores (ulcerations) and are very slow to heal. The infection can spread to other parts of the body.

How is Sporotrichosis spread?

The fungus enters the skin through small cuts or punctures from thorns, barbs, pine needles, or wires. It is not spread from person to person.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The first nodule may appear any time from one to twelve weeks after exposure to the fungus. Usually the nodules are visible within three weeks after the fungus enters the skin.

Is a person with Sporotrichosis contagious?

No, the disease is not spread from person-to person.

How is Sporotrichosis treated?

Sporotrichosis is generally treated with a drug called potassium iodide taken by mouth. There is a new drug also being used for treatment. Treatment is given until the skin lesions are completely healed.

Should a person with Sporotrichosis be excluded from work or school?

It is not necessary to exclude a person with sporotrichosis from work or school.

How can Sporotrichosis be prevented?

Sporotrichosis can be prevented by wearing gloves and long sleeves when handling pine seedlings, rose bushes, hay bales or other plants that might cause minor skin breaks.

Want more information?

Additional information about Sporotrichosis and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please call 202-442-5842.

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