



# Sarpy/Cass Department of Health & Wellness

701 Olson Drive, Suite 101 Papillion, Nebraska 68046 (402) 339-4334 Fax (402) 339-4235

## FACT SHEET

### Histoplasmosis

*Histoplasmosis* is caused by a fungus called *Histoplasma Capsulatum*. This disease primarily affects the lungs.

**Symptoms:** Some infected persons have no apparent ill effects. Symptoms in acute respiratory disease include fever, chest pains, and a dry nonproductive cough. Distinct patterns may be seen on a chest x-ray.

**Spread:** *Histoplasmosis Capsulatum* grows in the soil and material contaminated with bat or bird droppings. *Histoplasmosis* spores become airbourne when contaminated soil is disturbed. Breathing the spores causes the infection. The disease is not transmitted person to person.

**Incubation:** If symptomatic, the symptoms usually begin 3 to 17 days after exposure to the fungus.

**Contagious Period:** An infected person is not contagious to others.

**Precautions:** Chronic lung disease can worsen over months or years.

**Reportable:** Within seven days by the Provider or Laboratory to the state or local health department.

### Diagnosis and Treatment:

The physician will probably order a chest x-ray, blood tests, possibly a urine test, and/or a skin test. Antifungal medications are used to treat severe cases of acute histoplasmosis and all cases of chronic and disseminated disease. Mild disease usually resolves without treatment.

**Prevention:** The best way to prevent the spread *Histoplasmosis* is:

- Avoid areas that may harbor the fungus, e.g., accumulations of bird or bat droppings.
- Before starting a job or activity having a risk for exposure to *H.capsulatum*, consult the NIOSH/NCID document **Histoplasmosis: Protecting Workers at Risk**. A copy of this document may be obtained by requesting publication no. 2005-109 from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. You can also request additional information by calling 1-800-CDC-INFO.