



# INFECTION PREVENTION & YOU

## BLACK FUNGUS

Amidst the news of the COVID-19 crisis in India, there has been reporting of another infection spreading among people with COVID: “Black Fungus.” Here is what we know about this fungal infection.

### What is Black Fungus and how does it spread?

Black Fungus or mucormycosis is a rare but dangerous invasive fungal infection caused by a group of molds called mucormycetes. Black fungus commonly affects the sinuses and lungs but can affect skin and brain. People can get infected when they inhale the mold spores or touch the mold spore. A skin infection can occur after the fungus enters the skin through a scrape, burn, or other type of skin injury. Mucormycosis is not contagious from person to person. You cannot get it from an infected person.

Most cases of mucormycosis are sporadic (meaning they occur infrequently) but outbreaks do occasionally occur. Most outbreaks are associated with water leaks, poor air filtration, building construction, and natural disasters. Healthcare providers who are concerned about an unusual number of cases should contact their state or local public health department.

### Who gets Mucor infections?

This fungal infection is not harmful to most people, but can cause serious disease in people with weakened immune systems or other health conditions such as:

- Diabetes
- HIV or AIDS
- Cancer
- Organ transplant
- Low white blood cell count

- Long-term steroid use
- Recent COVID-19 infection

### What are the symptoms of a Mucor infection?

Symptoms depend on where in the body the fungus is growing and can include facial swelling, fever, skin ulcers, and black lesions in the mouth.

### How is it treated?

Mucormycosis is treated with antifungal medication and sometimes surgery to remove the infected tissue.

### How can you prevent a Mucor infection?

It is difficult to prevent inhalation of mold spores because they are common in the environment. In individuals with weakened immune systems, added precautions would include:

- Avoid areas with a lot of dust like a construction site.
- Avoid activities with soil, such as gardening.
- Avoid direct contact with water-damaged buildings.

### How worried should Americans be about Black Fungus?

This fungal infection occurs mostly in people whose immune systems are weakened or who are receiving corticosteroid therapy. Corticosteroids are often given to people who are very sick with COVID-19. Mucormycosis is a very rare disease, even though it is on the rise in India right now.

The best way to prevent Black Fungus infections is to get vaccinated so that you do not develop COVID-19.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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“Fungal Diseases: Mucormycosis”. CDC. Retrieved 23 May 2021.

[www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/mucormycosis/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/mucormycosis/index.html)