



## Hawaii State Department of Health

### Disease Investigation Branch

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## Sporotrichosis

### What is sporotrichosis?

Sporotrichosis is a fungal infection that usually affects the skin. It is caused by a fungus called *Sporothrix schenckii*. The fungus is commonly found in decaying vegetation, thorny plants, timber (lumber or wood), moss, and hay. Sporotrichosis is often thought of as an occupational disease of carpenters, farmers, gardeners, or horticulturists (people trained in the science of growing plants).

### How do you get it?

You can get sporotrichosis of the skin by introducing the fungus into the skin by puncture wounds that occur when handling thorny plants, lumber, decaying vegetation, or sphagnum moss. Sporotrichosis of the lungs is a rare condition that results from breathing in the fungal spores found in hay and cattle feed.

### What are the symptoms of sporotrichosis?

Sporotrichosis of the skin usually starts as a small, red, painless nodule (small lump) usually forms at the site of the wound. The nodule grows slowly and eventually ulcerates (breaks open), releasing small amounts of pus (usually, a thick, yellowish secretory fluid).

### When do the symptoms start?

The first sign of infection may occur between 1 week to 3 months following an injury, most often a puncture wound or cut.

### What is the treatment for sporotrichosis?

Antifungal medications can be prescribed by a doctor to treat infected wounds.

### How can you keep from getting it?

Wear protective clothing such as gloves and long sleeved shirts when handling pine seedlings, rose bushes, hay bales, or plant materials.

Promptly and thoroughly cleanse all puncture wounds and cuts.