



*Hawaii State Department of Health*  
*Disease Investigation Branch*  
Oahu 586-4586, Maui 984-8213, Big Island 933-  
0912, Kauai 241-3563

## **Cryptococcosis (*C. gattii*) Disease**

### **What is Cryptococcosis?**

Cryptococcosis is an infection caused by the fungus *Cryptococcus gattii* formerly known as *Cryptococcus neoformans var gattii*. The airborne fungus is found in the tropical and subtropical climates of the world.

### **How do you get it?**

Inhalation of airborne *C.gattii* fungus. The fungus can be found in the environment, in the soil and trees in tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world (Australia, Papua New Guinea, Africa, Asia, Europe, Mexico and South America). In the United States, *C. gattii* has been found in Washington, Oregon, California and Hawaii.

There is no human to human spread of infection or spread of infection between human and animals. Animals can become infected. Infection is only via inhalation of the yeast cells or spores.

### **What are the symptoms of *C. gattii* Infection?**

*C. gattii* can infect the lung or the central nervous system. It can also affect other parts of the body. The symptoms depend on the part of the body affected.

- Lungs: shortness of breath, cough, chest

pain fever

- Brain: Headache, neck pain, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, altered mental status, fever

### **When do symptoms start?**

Symptoms can develop between 2 to 13 months after inhalation of the fungus.

### **What is the treatment for Cryptococcosis?**

Antifungal treatment is available. The recommended treatment is fluconazole for mild infections and amphotericin B in combination with flucytosine for severe infections and those infections in the central nervous system.

### **How can you keep from getting it?**

There are no formal recommendations on prevention of *C. gattii* infection. People breathe in small amounts of fungi every day but never become sick. Those with weakened immune symptoms, predisposing respiratory conditions, elderly, smokers are at increased risk of becoming infected with the fungus. If you have symptoms that you think may be caused by *C. gattii*, you should see a healthcare provider as soon as possible.

For more information, see the CDC's website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/cryptococcosis-gattii/>