
PUBLIC ADVISORY

MENINGITIS LINKED TO EPIDURAL STEROID INJECTIONS

OCTOBER 11, 2012

Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are currently coordinating a multistate investigation of fungal meningitis among patients who received an epidural steroid injection with a potentially contaminated product. Several of these patients also suffered strokes that are believed to have resulted from their infection. No cases have been reported in Riverside County.

Is the source of the outbreak known?

CDC is investigating medications and products that are associated with this outbreak of meningitis. At this point, the original source of the outbreak has not been determined. However, injectable steroid medication has been linked to the outbreak.

The type of epidural medication given to patients affected by this outbreak **is not** the same type of medication as that given to women during childbirth.

Are patients who did not receive an injection at risk?

No. Fungal meningitis is not transmitted from person to person. These infections are associated with a potentially contaminated medication that is injected into the body.

What is fungal meningitis?

Fungal meningitis occurs when the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord are infected with a fungus. Fungal meningitis is rare and usually caused by the spread of a fungus through blood to the spinal cord.

What should patients do?

Find out if you received a potentially contaminated medication. If patients are concerned about which product was used in their procedure, they should first contact the physician who performed their procedure.

The facilities who received one of the lots recalled on September 26, 2012, are actively contacting patients to find out if they are feeling well. The list of facilities that received medication from one of these three lots is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/meningitis-facilities-map.html>.

If you have received a potentially contaminated medication, seek medical attention if you have symptoms. Infected patients have had very mild symptoms that are only slightly worse than usual. For example, many infected patients have had slight weakness, slightly worsened back pain, or even a mild headache. Patients with infections have typically developed symptoms within 1-4 weeks after their injection. However, shorter and longer timeframes between injection and onset of symptoms have been reported. The timeframe is still being investigated. Patients should watch vigilantly for symptoms if they were injected with potentially contaminated steroids and see a doctor if they have any of the symptoms.

Patients who have had an epidural steroid injection since May 21, 2012, and have any of the following symptoms, should talk to their doctor as soon as possible:

- New or worsening headache
- Fever
- Sensitivity to light
- Stiff neck
- New weakness or numbness in any part of your body
- Slurred speech
- Increased pain, redness or swelling at your injection site

Additional information is located at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/patients/faq-meningitis-outbreak-patients.html>