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. **This form of meningitis is not contagious.**

What is fungal meningitis?
Fungal meningitis occurs when the protective membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord are infected with a fungus. Fungal meningitis can develop after a fungus spreadthrough the bloodstream from somewhere else in the body, as a result of the fungus being introduced directly into the central nervous system, or by direct extension from an infected body site next to the central nervous system.

Is fungal meningitis common after epidural injections?
Epidural injections are generally very safe procedures, and complications are rare. Fungal meningitis is an extremely rare cause of meningitis overall, including after epidural injections. 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.

What is Aspergillus?
- Aspergillus is a mold, which is a type of fungus. This fungus is common to the environment and is found in places such as soil and on plants. It is also found in household dust and building material.
- There are many species of the Aspergillus fungus and Aspergillus fumigatus is one of the most common species.

What is Aspergillosis?
- Aspergillosis is the name of the condition when a person is infected with the Aspergillus fungus. Aspergillus usually causes illness in people with weakened immune systems.

What is the treatment for fungal illnesses?
- Antifungal medication is available to treat fungal infections. Your health care provider can determine the best treatment for you if you should develop an infection.

How would I know if I am at risk for fungal meningitis?
- If you received a methylprednisolone acetate epidural injection on or after May 21, 2012 from the medicine lots that were recalled, you may be at risk. If you are concerned, contact your health care provider to determine if you received medication from the implicated batches.

If this fungus is found in the environment, should I worry?
- Normally the body can fight off disease and prevent infections. However, because the medication (which may include the mold) was injected directly into the body, the body may not be as effective in fighting germs.
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What are the symptoms associated with this investigation?
• Patients typically developed symptoms that included worsening headache, stiff neck, sensitivity to light and fever within 1-4 weeks following their injection. Some also experienced stroke symptoms including localized weakness (on one side of the face, drooping face), numbness, slurred speech.

If I had a pain injection at my doctor’s office, should I be concerned?
• This investigation focuses on medication that was shipped to facilities in seven locations in New Jersey. Most of the medications used in these types of injections is safe and is not involved in the recall.

I was contacted because I received an epidural injection with one of the potentially contaminated steroid medications approximately 4 weeks ago but I feel fine. Do I still need to be concerned?
• 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 following symptoms, even if they have been previously evaluated: fever, new headache or headache that is getting worse, stiff neck, sensitivity to bright light, new weakness or numbness in any part of your body, slurred speech, new or worsening back pain, redness, or warmth or swelling at your injection sight. CDC will provide updated guidance as more information becomes available.

I was contacted because I received a joint injection with one of the potentially contaminated steroid medications approximately 4 weeks ago but I feel fine. Do I still need to be concerned?
• As of October, infections from steroid injections into joints other than the spine (e.g., knee, hip) have not been reported. However, the investigation is ongoing and joint infections may take longer to develop than meningitis. 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 following symptoms: fever, increased pain, redness, warmth, or swelling in the joint that received the injection or at the injection site. CDC will provide updated guidance as more information becomes available.

Are other medications from the New England Compounding Center located in Framingham, Massachusetts associated with infections?
• To date, CDC has not received reports of infections linked to other products from the New England Compounding Center. However, out of an abundance of caution, CDC recommends that patients cease use of any product produced by the New England Compounding Center until further information is available.
available. A list of products produced by the New England Compounding Center can be found through the FDA website at http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm322734.htm.

• If patients have taken or used medications from New England Compounding Center, and they are worried that they are ill because of use of one of these products, they should seek medical attention. Again, CDC has not received any reports of infection linked to other products from New England Compounding Center.

**What is a compounding pharmacy? Why are these medications compounded when they are also commercially available?**

• Compounding pharmacies create special formulations of medications in order to fit patients’ healthcare needs. For example, they may change the dose or change the formulation of a medication from a solid to a liquid.