

CANINE BLASTOMYCOSIS

Dog Owners: Information That Could Save Your Dog's Life

The *blastomyces dermatitidis* is a fungus, which, if contracted by dogs, has proven deadly if not properly diagnosed and treated. One problem in the diagnosis and treatment is the delayed onset of symptoms — in some cases, up to several months AFTER contracting the disease. Should a dog be infected in the summer, the symptoms may not become apparent until late fall, long after the fact.

This fungus exists in nature and remains in a relatively benign state if left undisturbed in the soil. The consensus of scientific studies suggests that the combination of

- disturbances/displacement of soil containing the fungus
- certain climatic conditions (moist and warm, not hot and dry) will cause the spread of the infectious spores through the air.

This disturbance of the soil could occur during gardening, construction, draining of beaver ponds or ditches, or simply by a dog digging.

Once the spores are inhaled into the lungs, the fungus transforms into a yeast which multiplies and causes pulmonary disease, sometimes spreading to other sites, such as the skin, eyes, joints, bones, and various body organs. Spores can also gain entry through a cut or scrape in a dog's paw, causing a rash or abscesses that refuse to heal.

Dogs are far more susceptible to the disease than humans or other animals, sporting dogs in particular, although it is suspected that their tendency to sniff and root in the soil may be a factor.

The symptoms of canine blastomycosis may vary depending on the initial contact and spread of the disease. Symptoms might include:

- lethargy
- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- loss of appetite
- fever
- swollen glands
- milky saliva
- eye lesions
- cysts
- rashes or abscesses (particularly on the paw or leg)

It is important to remember that not every symptom may be present at any one time. A dog may be lethargic with loss of appetite and mild fever, but without a cough. — or have a cough with a fever, but not seriously lethargic — and so on.

For further information, please link onto

www.vetmed.wisc.edu/pbs/blasto/ or
Veterinary Medical College at the
University of Wisconsin



Pointe au Baril Islanders' Association

www.pabia.ca