2012 Multi-state Fungal Meningitis Investigation (Aspergillus)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are coordinating a multi-state investigation of fungal meningitis among patients who received epidural steroid injections. Several of these patients also suffered strokes that may have resulted from their infection. Initial information indicates that these cases may be associated with a potentially contaminated medication. To date, several states in the Eastern US have identified cases that may be part of this investigation. Arizona is not currently among these states.

An investigation to identify the source is ongoing; however, interim data show that all infected patients received an injection with preservative-free methylprednisolone acetate (80mg/ml) prepared by New England Compounding Center, located in Framingham, Massachusetts. Presently, clinics in Nashville, Tennessee appear to have received large shipments of product from this compounding center.

Currently, no cases of meningitis or stroke in Arizona have been identified as part of this investigation, and we have not been notified that any of the potentially contaminated lots had been shipped to Arizona. The Arizona Department of Health Services is continuing to work with CDC and the FDA to identify if any of the potentially contaminated medication lots have been shipped to Arizona practitioners.

Details about potentially contaminated injectable steroids:

On September 25, 2012, the New England Compounding Center located in Framingham, MA voluntarily recalled the following lots of methylprednisolone acetate (PF) 80mg/ml:

- Methylprednisolone Acetate (PF) 80 mg/ml Injection, Lot #05212012@68, BUD 11/17/2012

- Methylprednisolone Acetate (PF) 80 mg/ml Injection, Lot #06292012@26, BUD 12/26/2012

- Methylprednisolone Acetate (PF) 80 mg/ml Injection, Lot #08102012@51, BUD 2/6/2013

On October 3, 2012, the compounding center ceased all production and initiated recall of all methylprednisolone acetate and other drug products prepared for intrathecal administration. Providers using methylprednisolone steroid injections should ensure that these products and lots have not been in-use at their facility. If these lots are discovered in-use in Arizona, immediately contact your local health department or ADHS at (602) 364-3676.

Who might be affected in Arizona?

We have no indication that the potentially contaminated lots were in use in Arizona.

However, patients who have received epidural (deep back or spinal areas) steroid injections after July 1, 2012 and are experiencing symptoms of meningitis (headache, fever, stiff neck, light sensitivity) should consult their personal care provider. It is important to note that fungal meningitis is not transmitted from person to person.

If you have recently received an epidural steroid injection outside of Arizona, particularly in Nashville, TN, please contact your personal care provider to discuss if any potentially contaminated lots of methylprednisolone were in use at that facility.

Patients receiving non-epidural injections of steroids should monitor the site of injection for localized signs of swelling or inflammation, indicating possible infection.

For additional information on the current CDC investigation, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/outbreaks/meningitis.html