

# At CDC, scientists fight to halt a deadly outbreak

October 14 2012, by Kate Brumback

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(AP)—At the main campus of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, dozens of people are working day and night to bring a meningitis outbreak under control.

Dr. John Jernigan is a medical epidemiologist at the CDC leading the clinical [investigation team](#) for the outbreak response. He says this infection, which is caused by a fungus, is very unusual.

Meningitis is typically caused by a virus or bacteria. The fungus linked to this outbreak is common in dirt and grasses, but it is making people sick because it found its way into a steroid injected into people with back pain.

That steroid was distributed by a Massachusetts pharmacy that is currently under investigation. Nearly 200 people in more than a dozen states have been sickened, including 15 who have died.

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