

CDC raises alarm about meningitis threat to patients visiting Mexican surgical clinics

June 8 2023, by Cara Murez



U.S. health officials are urgently trying to reach people who've recently

had medical procedures at clinics in Matamoros, Mexico, because they may be at risk of potentially fatal fungal meningitis.

Those at risk had procedures done under epidural anesthesia between Jan. 1 and May 13 at River Side Surgical Center and Clinica K-3 in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday.

As of June 1, 14 people in the United States had been identified with these suspected infections, 11 with probable infections and two with confirmed infections. Among them, three died. Another 185 people in the United States may have been exposed, according to an agency news release.

Patients could be in danger even if they don't have symptoms or have [mild symptoms](#), and they should seek immediate medical treatment, the CDC noted.

The CDC sounded the alarm after several U.S. laboratories and the Mexican national laboratory (InDRE) detected the fungus *Fusarium solani* species complex in the spinal fluid of some patients receiving follow-up care in Mexico or the United States after procedures at the clinic.

In a recent outbreak of central nervous system *Fusarium* infections in Durango, Mexico, 44% of patients died.

Fungal meningitis is a potentially deadly infection that causes swelling of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord.

Symptoms include fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea and vomiting, confusion and eye sensitivity to light.

The infection can quickly become severe and life-threatening.

Go immediately to the [emergency room](#) for testing if you were among those who received epidural anesthesia at one of these clinics, the CDC advised.

The two clinics associated with the outbreak were closed on May 13.

Public health officials also strongly encouraged [health care providers](#) to assess any patient, with or without symptoms, who had procedures at these clinics. This includes assessment with MRI and a lumbar puncture collecting cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). The priority should be obtaining CSF for testing.

Health departments and others are encouraged to raise awareness about the outbreak, even if no one in their area has been identified as at risk.

You should also cancel any elective procedure that involves epidural (spinal) anesthesia in Matamoros, Mexico, and any travel associated with such a procedure, until there is evidence that there is no longer a risk for infection, the CDC said.

More information: The Meningitis Research Foundation has more on [fungal meningitis](#).

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