Thinking Fungus

A Veteran and Caregiver Discussion Guide to Better Care

Use this guide to prepare for a conversation with a healthcare provider. Veterans can complete it for themselves; caregivers can complete it with or on behalf of a veteran. Check topics to discuss and use the note spaces to record details.

1. SERVICE, TRAVEL, AND EXPOSURE HISTORY

- ☐ Locations and dates of military service, deployment, or travel
- ☐ Exposure to dust, soil, sand, construction sites, or demolition
- ☐ Exposure to caves, tunnels, or areas with bat or bird droppings
- ☐ A wound or injury contaminated with soil, water, or debris
- ☐ Living or working in places with water damage, mold, or damp conditions
- ☐ Exposure during farming or after disasters such as hurricanes, floods, or wildfires
- ☐ Contact with animals, their waste, or their bedding during work, farming, or recreation

NOTES • Locations, dates, exposures, and injuries

2. MEDICAL HISTORY

- ☐ A weakened immune system due to a medical condition or medication
- ☐ Cancer, chemotherapy, radiation, or a stem cell or organ transplant
- ☐ Chronic lung disease, such as asthma or COPD, or other long-term conditions
- ☐ A prolonged hospitalization, ICU stay, or major surgery
- ☐ Long courses of antibiotics, repeated infections, or previous fungal infections
- ☐ Current medications, including steroids, biologics, or other medicines that suppress the immune system

NOTES • Conditions, medications, past infections, surgeries

Before your appointment
Bring your medication lists, test results, and travel or exposure history.

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Your health changes and questions

3. CHANGES IN HEALTH

- ☐ Symptoms that have changed over time
- ☐ An infection that is not improving as expected, such as pneumonia not responding to antibiotics
- ☐ New or unexplained cough, fever, shortness of breath, sinus problems, skin lesions, fatigue, or weight loss
- ☐ Symptoms that last a long time or keep coming back
- ☐ A wound, injury, or infection that is getting worse or not healing as expected

NOTES • When symptoms started, changes, treatments tried

4. QUESTIONS FOR THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

- ☐ What is relevant from the veteran's service, travel, and exposure history?
- ☐ Could a fungal infection be one possible cause of these symptoms?
- ☐ What diagnostic tests would be appropriate, and what would the results tell us? For example, would imaging, fungal cultures, or biomarker tests help?
- ☐ What other conditions should be considered?
- ☐ What are the next steps and possible treatment options?
- ☐ Which symptoms should prompt urgent medical care?

NOTES • Questions, information to share, next steps

Important

Every veteran's experience is unique. This is a discussion aid, not a symptom checklist, diagnostic tool, or testing protocol. Ask your healthcare provider what symptoms should prompt urgent medical care. For more information about fungal infections, visit fightfungus.org.