



Lawrence  
General  
Hospital

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# Important Meningitis Outbreak Update

- The federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) are currently investigating infections related to contaminated medications which were produced at New England Compounding Center of Framingham, Massachusetts (NECC). The contaminated medications have been linked to a nationwide outbreak of meningitis, a serious health condition. They were recalled across the United States on September 25, 2012.
- No medications linked to the outbreak were shipped to Massachusetts healthcare providers, and no cases of meningitis or other infections definitely linked to NECC products have been identified in Massachusetts.
- Strictly as a precaution, all other NECC medications were recalled across the country on October 6, 2012. These products were used in clinics, hospitals and doctor's offices to treat patients for various conditions, including back pain, joint pain and eye problems.
- **Lawrence General Hospital has removed all products from our inventory that were prepared by NECC. Again, none of this medication has been linked to the outbreak, this action is strictly precautionary.**
- However, if you are having symptoms from the effects of an injection you received that worry you or are unexplained or worsening, then you should contact your healthcare provider for further advice.

*Please refer to side 2 for answers to frequently asked questions regarding the meningitis outbreak.*

# Frequently Asked Questions: Meningitis Outbreak Investigation

## What is Fungal Meningitis?

Swelling of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord caused by an infection due to a fungus.

## What are the symptoms related to this outbreak?

Symptoms can come on gradually and may appear mild at first. Symptoms include headache, fever, nausea, stiffness of the neck, as well as confusion, dizziness and discomfort to bright lights. Other symptoms may include swelling, increasing pain, and redness at the injection site.

## I've recently received a steroid injection, what should I do?

If you have received a steroid injection since May 21, 2012 and have any of the symptoms listed above, contact your physician right away. Also, the facilities that received medications from the contaminated lots of injections are actively calling patients to find out how they are feeling.

## I did not receive an injection, can I still get sick?

Unlike viral meningitis, you can only contract fungal meningitis if you were the recipient of a contaminated steroid injection in your spine or other joints. ***It can not be transmitted from person to person and it is not the same type of epidural medication given to women during childbirth.***

## Does Lawrence General Hospital use medications from the New England Compounding Center?

All products produced by NECC have been identified and quarantined by the Pharmacy. **None of these medications were injectable.** Although the CDC has not received reports of infection linked to other products from New England Compounding, as a precaution Lawrence General has discontinued the use of all medications produced by this Center.

**For more information and updates on this outbreak, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**