



New York Deaths Tied to Bat Feces in Cannabis Soil

Description

Two men in Rochester, N.Y., succumbed to a rare fungal infection, histoplasmosis, after exposure to bat feces, or guano, which they intended to use as fertilizer for cannabis plants. This story, detailed in the latest edition of the journal *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*, highlights the health risks associated with such practices.

Histoplasmosis, a severe type of pneumonia, arises from inhaling spores of the fungus *histoplasma capsulatum*, frequently found in bat guano. In both cases, the spores were accidentally inhaled from the fecal matter that the men either used or planned to use as fertilizer. Although their infections were unrelated, the researchers noted a dangerous trend among cannabis growers using bat guano, potentially leading to outbreaks of histoplasmosis. The authors stressed the importance of raising awareness among healthcare providers and the public to amplify preventive measures and ensure timely diagnoses.

In one detailed account, a 64-year-old victim, who regularly smoked cannabis and tobacco, reported a significant bat infestation in his attic, resulting in a thick layer of guano. Despite several inspections, he intended to use this guano as fertilizer and subsequently went on to develop a host of symptoms over several months, including a sodium imbalance, chronic cough, and weight loss of 35 pounds. His health further deteriorated due to severe peripheral arterial disease.

The report serves as a stark reminder of the hidden dangers such shortcuts may pose. It is increasingly evident that awareness and education are crucial to safeguarding health, particularly in this burgeoning trend among cannabis cultivators. Bat guano might seem like a cost-effective fertilizer, but it's truly a double-edged sword if safety precautions are neglected.

Vocabulary List:

1. **Histoplasmosis** /ˌhɪstəpləʊˈzməʊsɪs/ (noun): A severe type of pneumonia caused by inhaling fungal spores.
2. **Guano** /ˈɡwɑː.nəʊ/ (noun): Fertilizer containing the accumulated excrement of seabirds or bats.
3. **Infestation** /ɪnˌfɛsˈteɪʃən/ (noun): The presence of an unusually large number of insects or animals in a place.
4. **Symptoms** /ˈsɪmptəmz/ (noun): Physical or mental features indicating a condition or disease.
5. **Deteriorated** /dɪˈtɪəriəreɪtɪd/ (verb): Described as having worsened in quality or condition.
6. **Awareness** /əˈwɛrnəs/ (noun): Knowledge or perception of a situation or fact.

Comprehension Questions



Multiple Choice

1. What rare fungal infection did the two men in Rochester, N.Y. succumb to?
Option: Histoplasmosis
Option: Coccidioidomycosis
Option: Aspergillosis
Option: Cryptococcosis
2. What is the name of the fungus frequently found in bat guano that causes histoplasmosis?
Option: Blastomyces dermatitidis
Option: Candida albicans
Option: Histoplasma capsulatum
Option: Aspergillus fumigatus
3. What symptoms did the 64-year-old victim develop after exposure to bat guano?
Option: Fever and Headache
Option: Chills and Joint Pain
Option: Nausea and Vomiting
Option: Chronic cough and Weight loss
4. What did the authors stress the importance of in relation to preventing histoplasmosis outbreaks?
Option: Increasing bat guano supply
Option: Education and Awareness
Option: Using stronger pesticides
Option: Promoting tobacco use
5. What led to the severe health deterioration of the 64-year-old victim?
Option: Fungal pneumonia
Option: Peripheral Arterial Disease
Option: Obesity
Option: Hypertension
6. What is the key takeaway regarding the use of bat guano as fertilizer?
Option: It is completely safe
Option: It is a potential health hazard
Option: It is effective for rapid plant growth
Option: It has no impact on health



True-False

7. Histoplasmosis can arise from inhaling spores of the fungus *Histoplasma capsulatum* found in bat guano.
8. The two men who succumbed to histoplasmosis had infections that were related to each other.
9. The 64-year-old victim intended to use bat guano as fertilizer despite being aware of the health risks associated with it.
10. Bat guano is a cost-effective and completely safe fertilizer for cannabis plants.
11. The report emphasizes the need for awareness and education to prevent health risks associated with shortcuts in farming practices.
12. Histoplasmosis only affects individuals who smoke cannabis.

Gap-Fill

13. The fungus _____ frequently found in bat guano causes histoplasmosis.
14. The 64-year-old victim suffered from severe peripheral arterial disease and a chronic cough after exposure to bat guano as fertilizer for several months, resulting in a weight loss of 35 _____.
15. The use of bat guano as fertilizer can potentially lead to outbreaks of _____ among cannabis growers.
16. The health risks associated with using bat guano as fertilizer highlight the importance of raising _____ to prevent such infections.
17. The story featured in *Open Forum Infectious Diseases* underscores the need for _____ among healthcare providers and the public.
18. Bat guano may be perceived as a cost-effective fertilizer, but its use without proper safety precautions



can be a _____ to health.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Histoplasmosis 2. Histoplasma capsulatum 3. Chronic cough and Weight loss 4. Education and Awareness 5. Peripheral Arterial Disease 6. It is a potential health hazard

True-False: 7. True 8. False 9. True 10. False 11. True 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. Histoplasma capsulatum 14. pounds 15. histoplasmosis 16. awareness 18. hazard

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What can lead to genetic variations in living organisms?

Option: Infections

Option: Capabilities

Option: Adapt

Option: Transmission

2. Which illness is caused by a viral infection affecting the respiratory system?

Option: Contagion

Option: Tragic

Option: Vigilance

Option: Influenza

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

3. Living organisms _____ to their environment over time.

4. In order to prevent the spread of diseases it is important to maintain _____ and follow health guidelines.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)



5. The of the virus was traced back to a particular location.

6. The doctor performed various tests to confirm the of the disease.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Infections 2. Influenza

Gap-Fill: 3. Adapt 4. Vigilance

Matching sentence: 1. Transmission 2. Diagnosis

CATEGORY

1. Health - LEVEL4

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