

# KCA TOOL BOX TALK: Histoplasmosis



TEAMWORK  
IMPROVES SAFETY

## Signatures

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Histoplasmosis is a disease caused by a mold that grows in soil and in material found in bat and bird droppings. Workers can become sick from breathing dust containing mold spores when contaminated matter is disturbed. Workers who are most at risk include bridge painters, demolition workers, heavy equipment operators, roofers, and heating and air-conditioning system installers.

***Here is an Example:*** Juan, a roofer in Ohio, had been remodeling the roof of a previously abandoned house that had new owners. In the middle of the remodeling project he began experiencing shortness of breath, joint stiffness, chills, and fever. His doctor diagnosed histoplasmosis and treated him with an antifungal medication. Even though he was successfully treated, Juan might continue to experience discomfort, because histoplasmosis can lead to the scarring of lung tissue.

1. Do you have contact with bird or bat droppings?
2. Have you ever experienced any of the symptoms mentioned above?
3. Were you treated by a doctor?

## Preventing and Treating Histoplasmosis:

- Avoid areas that may harbor the fungus, such as accumulations of bird or bat droppings.
- Recognize the symptoms including a flu-like feeling, chest pains and a dry cough with no mucus.
- Prevent the accumulation of manure.
- Post health risk warnings.
- Wear a respirator approved for dust.
- Wear gloves during work and wash up afterwards.
- Mist piles of droppings with water before and during cleanup activities to keep the dust down.
- Dispose of waste.

For more information visit OSHA STANDARD 1926.25

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***Teamwork Improves Safety!***

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