

Reactive Media Statement

In mid-June, air tests detected low levels of Aspergillus in one of our equipment storage rooms and an adjoining operating room. Aspergillus is a common environmental mold often found outdoors, and the level we detected is considered safe by many health care organizations. The affected rooms were immediately closed; all equipment and supplies were sequestered and either cleaned or disposed of; we inspected all of our operating room spaces to verify the air was safe; and we hired an outside expert to recommend additional corrective measures. We will complete the expert's recommended measures before reopening the affected areas. We also reported the discovery and our response to Public Health — Seattle & King County, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Both agencies agree with our response and have not required any additional measures.

In rare cases, Aspergillus can cause a surgical site infection. Though we believe the risk to our patients is extremely low, the safety of our patients is our highest priority. Out of an abundance of caution, we are contacting patients who may have been exposed between March and June of this year since most Aspergillus surgical site infections become symptomatic within three months of surgery. We are educating patients and their families on symptoms of potential Aspergillus infection and offering a free follow-up visit. The vast majority of our surgical patients are not affected.

We are deeply sorry that this happened and for the additional stress it has caused our patients and families. We are committed to caring for any patient who may be affected, and are taking the recommended steps to prevent this from happening again.

Only If Asked - Reactive Responses

How many patients are potentially affected/are you contacting?

We are contacting approximately 136 patients who had surgery in the affected rooms between March and June 2018.

Have you had any patients with a confirmed aspergillus surgical site infection?

We have had two patients with a confirmed Aspergillus surgical site infection. Out of respect for privacy, we do not provide detail about specific patient cases.

What are some symptoms of a surgical site infection?

Although the risk for infection is very low, the common symptoms can include redness, swelling or drainage from the surgical site or fever.

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