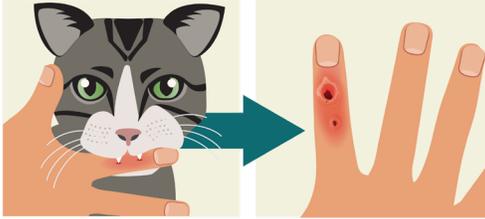


# Cat-associated sporotrichosis

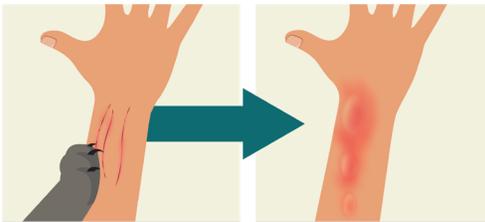


**FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE CONTACT WITH CATS:** Cat-associated sporotrichosis is a potentially severe infection caused by the fungus *Sporothrix brasiliensis*, which spreads through the bite or scratch of an infected cat. This disease is mainly seen in Brazil and neighboring countries.

## How do people get cat-associated sporotrichosis?



People can get cat-associated sporotrichosis from the bite or scratch of an infected cat. Some people can get sporotrichosis after direct contact with fluids from an infected cat or from inhaling the fungus, typically after a cat with obvious sores on its face shakes its head.



Cat-associated sporotrichosis caused by *S. brasiliensis* has been seen only in Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, but it can also affect cats that have a history of travel to those countries. Suspected cases have also occurred in Mexico, Colombia, Uruguay, and Panama.

## What are symptoms of sporotrichosis in humans?

**Sporotrichosis on the skin** is the most common form of this disease.

Symptoms include:

- A small, painless bump that develops 1 to 12 weeks after the fungus has entered through a break in the skin.
  - » The bump can be red, pink, or purple and usually appears on the finger, hand, or arm where a scratch or bite occurred.
  - » The bump will eventually grow larger and can look like an open sore or ulcer that is very slow to heal.
  - » Additional bumps or sores can appear later near the original one.

**Sporotrichosis in the eyes** is less common. Symptoms can include redness of the eye, redness or swelling of the eyelid, eye pain, and possible vision changes.

**Sporotrichosis in the lungs** is rare. Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, and fever.

**Disseminated sporotrichosis** occurs when the infection spreads to another part of the body, such as the bones, joints, or the central nervous system. This form of sporotrichosis usually affects people who have weakened immune systems.

## How is sporotrichosis diagnosed?

Sporotrichosis can sometimes be diagnosed by taking a swab or scrape of a skin sore and looking at it under a microscope. However, your healthcare provider may need to take a small tissue sample (biopsy) of the infected area of the body. That sample is sent to a laboratory for tests (usually a fungal culture) to find out what is causing the infection. Blood tests can also be used to help diagnose severe sporotrichosis, but generally can't be used to diagnose a skin infection. If you think you might have sporotrichosis, visit your healthcare provider.

## How is sporotrichosis treated?

Most cases of sporotrichosis involve the skin or tissues underneath the skin. These infections must be treated with prescription antifungal medicine for several months.

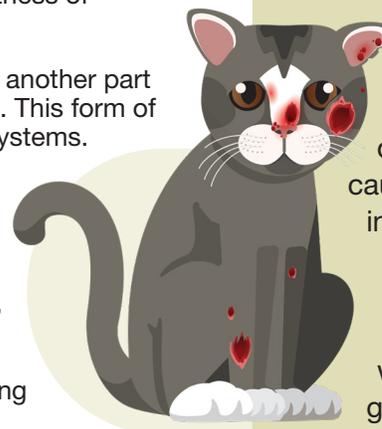
## How can I lower the chance of developing sporotrichosis?

- Be careful when handling cats in Brazil and around the world, especially those that appear sick. Cat bites, scratches, and fluids can spread germs, even if the wound does not seem deep or serious.
- Be cautious with unfamiliar animals, and approach cats with care.
- Limit contact between domestic and feral cats.

## What does sporotrichosis look like in cats?

Cats with sporotrichosis often have sores on their faces, particularly around the nose.

These sores usually develop from wounds caused during fights with an infected cat. Cats can also transfer the fungus to their claws and mouths after licking infected wounds and during grooming.



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