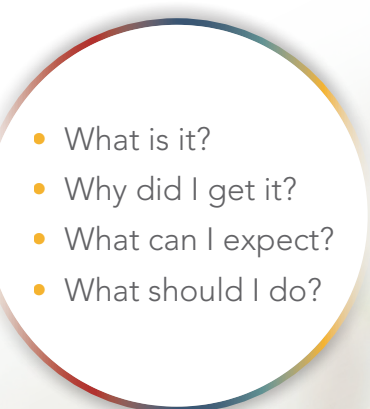




UNDERSTANDING
invasive fungal infection

If you have an invasive fungal infection

- 
- What is it?
 - Why did I get it?
 - What can I expect?
 - What should I do?



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About invasive fungal infection (IFI)

What is an invasive fungal infection (IFI)?

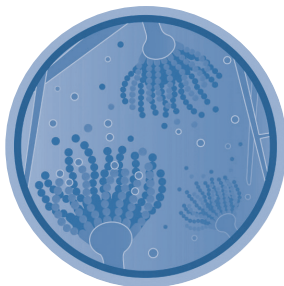
Molds and yeasts are types of fungi. These fungi are not a kind of bacteria, but fungi are similar to bacteria in some ways. They live all around you. They can be in the air, soil, plants, and water. Most do not harm people, most of the time.

When a fungus gets into your body and makes you sick, this is called a **fungal infection**. You may have had athlete's foot or a vaginal yeast infection. These are both kinds of fungal infections. They generally are not considered serious. But when a fungus spreads in your body and makes you very sick, this is called an **invasive fungal infection**. It can be life-threatening. Your doctor needs to treat it right away.

Two of the more common fungi
that can cause IFI are:



Candida (a common yeast)



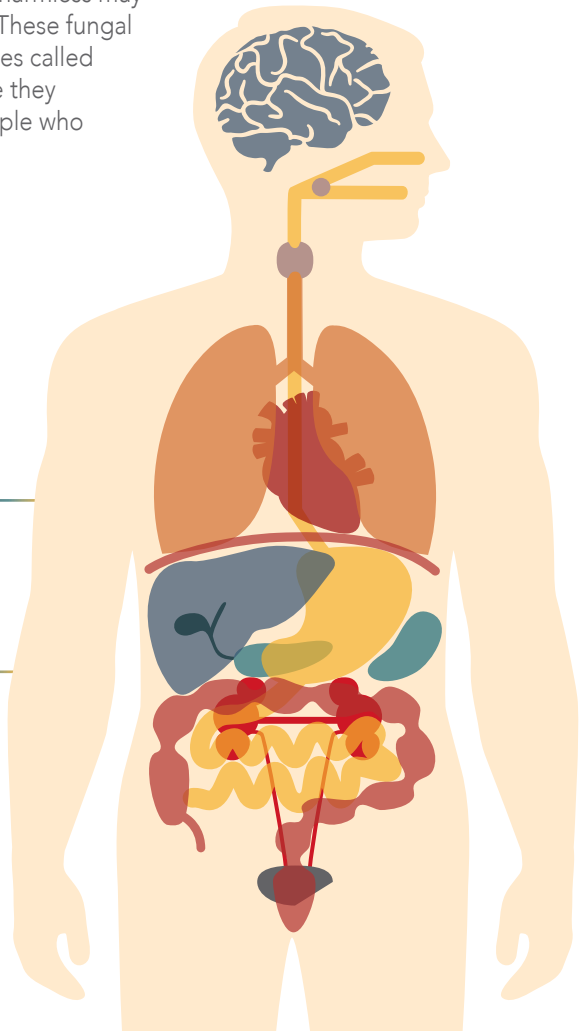
Aspergillus (a common mold)

Why did I get an IFI?

Although fungi are all around us, most people do not get sick from them. This is because of the immune system. The immune system stops the fungi from causing illness. But people who are already sick or taking some types of medicine, including steroids, can have a weakened immune system. This makes it harder for the body to fight the fungi. People who are at greater risk include those with some kinds of cancer or HIV/AIDS, people who have had a stem cell or an organ transplant, or people who are taking certain medicines that can affect the immune system. Having diabetes or extensive burns can also put you at risk.

The fungi may enter the body through cuts in the skin. Or you may breathe fungi into your lungs. Or, fungi in your digestive tract that are normally harmless may spread to your blood. These fungal infections are sometimes called **opportunistic** because they take advantage of people who are already sick.

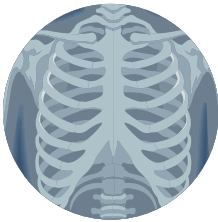
Fungi can get into the blood, lungs, sinuses, brain, and other organs



How do the doctors know I have an IFI?

The first signs of IFI are often fever and changes in your blood work. But these signs also could be due to a bacterial or viral infection. So your health care team may take a sample of blood or other body fluid or tissue. These samples go to a lab where one or more tests are done. Your care team also may look at your lungs or other body areas with an x-ray or **computerized tomography (CT) scan**. All of these tests together can show what is causing the infection. If it is a fungus, the doctors will try to find out exactly what kind it is. Different types of IFI get different treatments.

Tests your doctors may use to check for IFI



Imaging

- You are sent for an x-ray or CT scan of your lungs or other body sites
- An expert called a **radiologist** checks the image for any signs of infection



Culture

- A sample of your blood or other body fluid is collected
- An expert called a **microbiologist** puts the sample in a special dish to see if fungi grow



Microscopy

- A microbiologist or **pathologist** looks at a blood or tissue sample under a microscope
- These experts can tell what kind of fungus is causing the infection

What does this IFI mean for me and my family?

If you were already sick with another illness, having an IFI can make it harder to fight that illness. And if your immune system is weakened, this fight can be even more difficult. Your doctors may treat both illnesses at the same time. But sometimes when a person gets an IFI, doctors will stop certain treatments that affect the immune system.

With the right treatment, many people can recover from an IFI.

If a family member is helping you with your care, they can help you deal with the IFI. For example, if you are out of the hospital and taking medicine,

it is important to take your medicine as prescribed by your doctor. Your family can help you remember to do this. (If you are a family member or other caregiver, see page 11.)

Did you know?

An IFI is not likely to spread from one person to another.

Who will treat my IFI?

You may already have a few doctors caring for you. One of these doctors may focus on infections. Such a doctor is called an **infectious disease specialist**. This doctor is sometimes called an **ID specialist** for short. They may lead your health care team to treat the IFI. Other members of the team treating your IFI may include:

- General medicine doctor, such as a *hospitalist*
- Hematologist and/or oncologist
- Pharmacist
- Surgeon
- Nurse practitioner or physician assistant
- One or more nurses, case managers, or social workers

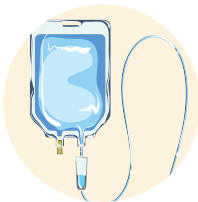
What kind of treatment will I get?

You will probably be given a medicine to help stop the fungus. This is called an **antifungal medicine**. If you are in the hospital, you may be given the medicine through an **intravenous (IV)** line into a vein. But often, antifungal medicine can be given as a pill. You may have to start treatment with IV medicine and then switch to a pill or liquid. Different types of IFI get different treatments.

Some people also need surgery to help get rid of their fungal infection. This depends on the type of infection you have and where it is in your body.

If your immune system is weakened, your doctor may give you medicine that is designed to make it stronger. The purpose of this medicine is to help your body fight off the IFI.

Some possible treatments for IFI



IV medicine



Oral medicine
(pill or liquid form)



Surgery

What should I know about the antifungal medicine?

The medicine can help kill or slow the spread of the fungus. You may need to take it for weeks or months. The medicine may cause side effects. It may interact with other medicines you are taking. Every medicine is different. Ask your doctor about the benefits and risks of the one you are taking. Also ask about any side effects to watch out for. But do not stop taking your prescribed medicine without talking to the doctor first.

How will the doctor know if I am better?

Your doctors will keep track of your fever and your blood work. They also will keep doing lab tests and imaging tests like x-rays to see if the fungus is gone and to make sure your body is getting the right amount of some medicines. After the fungus is gone, you may be at risk for another IFI. Ask your doctor how you can help protect yourself.

How can I help myself?

If you are prescribed an antifungal medicine, it is important to take it as prescribed. Do not skip a dose and do not stop taking your medicine. If you are supposed to take it with food or on an empty stomach, be sure to do so. If you have any questions about your condition or how to take the medicine, ask your doctor right away. You may be taking many different medicines and it may be hard to remember when and how to take them all. Ask a family member or friend to help you.

What if I can't afford my medicine?

Many drug companies have programs for people who cannot afford medicines. If you are worried about the cost of your medicine, ask your doctor. The maker of your medicine may have this kind of program. You may also find information about the program on the internet. You or a family member may search the name of the medicine or the drug company along with the word *assistance* or *support*.

Where can I get more information about IFI?

You can access additional *myIFI* resources at <https://www.astellasresources.com>.

The following are some other websites or apps with information about specific types of IFI:



***myIFI* Mobile App**

<https://myifi.thehwpgroup.com/myifi.php>

Available on the App Store® and Google Play™ store



National Library of Medicine: Fungal Infections

<https://medlineplus.gov/fungalinfections.html>



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Types of Fungal Diseases

<https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/index.html>

App Store is a registered trademark of Apple Inc.
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Questions to consider asking before leaving the hospital

You may not stay in the hospital, even if you are still taking antifungal medicine. If you are not very sick, you may be sent home or to another medical facility. Talk with your health care team before you leave. It is important to understand what to expect. This part of the brochure lists some questions you might consider asking and information about why these questions might be important.

Where am I going?

You may not be sent right to your home. It depends on how much care you need. You might go to a *skilled nursing facility*. This used to be called a *nursing home*. You might go to an inpatient rehab center. Your health care team may help pick a place based on your needs and your resources. Any time you are sent from one place to another to get treatment, this is called a *transition of care*.

(continued on next page)

Will my antifungal medicine change?

Your doctors may switch your antifungal medicine before you leave the hospital. This might happen if they find out more about the fungus causing your infection. Or, if you are getting the medicine in a vein, you might get a pill or liquid to swallow instead. This is called switching from IV to oral medicine. Some people need to keep taking IV medicine after they leave the hospital. This could mean trips to an *infusion center* where the medicine is given.

What should I ask about the antifungal medicine?

Every medicine is different. And people can have different reactions to the same medicine. It is important to know how to take the medicine and what to expect. Consider getting answers to questions like these:

- How often should I take the medicine?
- What should I do if I forget to take a dose?
- How long do I have to take it for?
- Do I have to take it with food or on an empty stomach?
- Can I take it at the same time as my other medicines?
- What kinds of side effects might I have?
- What should I do if I have side effects?
- What over-the-counter medicines should I avoid?

What if I need help at home?

Your family or friends may not always be able to help you at home. Talk with the health care team about your needs. Your insurance may pay for a home health aide or a visiting nurse. Your care team can meet with you and your caregivers before you leave the hospital, to discuss the transition.

Which doctor should I see after I go home?

You may have a lot of different doctors. Be sure you know which doctor or doctors you should see about your IFI after you go home. It may be a good idea to make an appointment with that doctor before you even leave the hospital. Make sure that doctor will be given a copy of your medical records. Bring any information you have been given to each doctor visit. Also bring a list of your medicines.

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What does my insurance cover?

You may have different benefits in the hospital than you do after you leave. It is important to know what your insurance will cover once you leave the hospital. You may need to pay a copay, or out-of-pocket amount. Be sure to ask questions about your insurance coverage. Or ask a family member or other caregiver to help you with this.

You may not have insurance, or your out-of-pocket cost may be high. If the cost of your treatment is a concern, see the section *What if I can't afford my medicine?* on page 8.

Who on the care team can help me when it is time to leave the hospital?

Any care team member may be able to help. But some team members spend more of their time helping patients coming in and out of the hospital. They also may help with insurance coverage. These team members may include a discharge planner, case manager, and/or social worker.

If you are a family member or other caregiver

Do you help take care of someone who has just been diagnosed with an IFI? If so, you probably already help them in a lot of ways. Driving to doctor's appointments or the hospital. Refilling medications. Reminding your loved one when it is medication time. Repeating instructions from the doctor or pharmacist. Having an IFI does not change any of that. But there is now one more illness and at least one more medication to think about.

This can be overwhelming for both you and for your loved one. But they may need your help to get through this. The IFI will try to make things worse. You, your loved one, and the doctors need to work together to try to fight off the IFI.

If you have not already done so, read the rest of this brochure to find out more about IFI. And visit the websites or apps listed on page 9. Learning more may help you—and your loved one—become even more knowledgeable in fighting the IFI.



Access additional *myIFI* resources at
<https://www.astellasresources.com>

