

## MEDIA RELEASE

**DATE:** April 19, 2017

**END DATE:** May 19, 2017

**CONTACT:** Danielle Steplowski, MS  
Epidemiologist

**PHONE:** (810) 257-3815

**RE:** Stenotrophomonas Maltophilia

Due to the rising interest in *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* infections, the Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) wants to keep everyone informed about this bacterium. *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* is a multidrug-resistant organism that is most commonly associated with respiratory tract infections. Transmission of *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* to susceptible individuals may occur through direct contact from several sources. While *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* is a rare cause of infection, it is becoming more common among hospitalized individuals with weakened immune systems.

*Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* is generally not considered dangerous for healthy individuals and usually infects those who are critically ill or immunocompromised. Individuals who are at increased risk of infection include those with cancer, cystic fibrosis, HIV, neutropenia, recent surgery or trauma, mechanical ventilation, previous therapy with broad-spectrum antibiotics, and prolonged hospitalization (especially in intensive care units).

Infections from this bacterium can occur in a variety of tissues and organs and symptoms vary depending on the affected location. As most *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* infections involve the respiratory tract, symptoms often include a cough, shortness of breath, and chest pain when breathing or coughing. Individuals with any symptoms of infection similar to those mentioned above should contact their healthcare provider. A *Stenotrophomonas* fact sheet is posted on the GCHD website at [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us).

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**Floyd J. McCree Courts & Human Services Building** ♦ 630 S. Saginaw Street, Ste. 4 ♦ Flint, Michigan 48502-1540

**Burton Branch** ♦ G-3373 S. Saginaw Street ♦ Burton, Michigan 48529

Main Phone 810-257-3612 ♦ Visit us at: [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us)

## What is Stenotrophomonas Maltophilia Infection?

- An infection caused by multidrug-resistant bacteria called *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* (*S. maltophilia*). These bacteria have been found in clinical and medical settings (i.e. hospitals and clinics), water-based environments, soil, and on contaminated medical devices and solutions. Infection can occur in a variety of organs and tissues, but most commonly involves the respiratory tract. Infections associated with *S. maltophilia* include:
  - Pneumonia
  - Bacteremia
  - COPD
  - Urinary tract infection
  - Endocarditis
  - Meningitis
  - Eye infection
  - Soft tissue infection

## Who is at risk?

- Individuals with weakened immune systems from diseases like HIV, cancer, COPD, and cystic fibrosis
- Individuals taking medications that weaken the immune system
- Individuals that have had an organ transplant or have an open wound
- Individuals with an indwelling catheter or using respiratory therapy equipment
- Individuals having prolonged hospitalization or an intensive care unit stay

## What are symptoms that could occur?

- High fever
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Cough
- Rapid heart rate
- Pneumonia

As infection can occur in a variety of organs or body parts, symptoms relate to the body part affected.

## How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Physician evaluation and laboratory testing
- Treatment often includes antibiotics (drugs that kill bacteria in the body)

## How is it spread?

- Direct contact with a contaminated source or a source not properly cleaned
- Rarely spread from person-to-person

## Are there complications?

- Delay in appropriate treatment can increase risk of complications
- Like many other illnesses, individuals with other health issues are at greater risk of complications

## If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-1017