

WHAT IS HISTOPLASMOSIS?

Histoplasma capsulatum is a dimorphic fungus that is soil borne. It is one of four pathogenic fungi that we have in the United States. In cats, it prefers to infect lungs and bone. In dogs, it prefers to be in the intestinal tract. VSNT is seeing more cases of histoplasmosis in cats, all of which are indoor, for some unknown reason. It is soil borne, so it is inexplicable why so many indoor cats are getting the disease. It may be being carried in on our shoes and clothing.

HOW DO YOU TREAT HISTOPLASMOSIS?

Although it is a fungal infection, and not cancer, this disease can be extremely difficult to treat. Most cats and dogs need to be treated long term, and may never be able to be removed from their medication. The patient usually begins treatment on itraconazole or another antifungal. Amphotericin B (AMP B) liposome encapsulated can often be used the next week. AMP B must be administered intravenously, and it has the potential to cause toxicity to the kidneys. For that reason, the urine and lab work must be closely monitored. This infection is not transmissible from the patient to you or your family, or any other of the dogs and cats.