

What is *Naegleria fowleri*?

Naegleria is an amoeba commonly found in the environment. Only one species of *Naegleria* has been found to infect humans, *Naegleria fowleri*.

Where is *Naegleria fowleri* found?

Naegleria fowleri is found worldwide. Most commonly, the amoeba is found in the soil and in warm bodies of fresh water, such as lakes, rivers, and hot springs, unchlorinated swimming pools, and in warm water discharge pools from industrial plants.

How does infection with *Naegleria fowleri* occur?

Infections are rare. The amoeba enters the body through the nose and travels to the brain and spinal cord while the person is swimming underwater or diving. Infection is most common during the dry, hot summer months, when the temperature is above 80° F and the water is warm.

What are the signs and symptoms of *Naegleria fowleri* infection?

Headache, fever, nausea and vomiting, stiff neck, confusion, lack of attention to people and surroundings, loss of balance and bodily control, seizures, and hallucinations are signs and symptoms of infection. *Naegleria fowleri* infection is also called primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM). Symptoms worsen; infection usually results in death within 7-10 days.

Is there treatment for infection with *Naegleria fowleri*?

Yes; however, most cases are fatal if not diagnosed and treated immediately.

How can I prevent an infection with *Naegleria fowleri*?

- Do not swim or jump into warm, fresh water, such as ponds or warm water discharge pools, or unchlorinated swimming pools.
- Do not swim in polluted water.
- Do not swim in areas posted as "No Swimming."
- Hold your nose, or use nose plugs when jumping or diving into water.

For further information on protecting yourself from recreational water illnesses, please visit

- http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/naegleria/factsht_naegleria.htm
- <http://www.dpd.cdc.gov/dpdx/HTML/FreeLivingAmebic.htm>
- <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~mow/chap29.html>