Zygomycosis in Cats

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Zygomycosis is an uncommon skin disease caused by the class of fungi called *Zygomycetes*. Fungi in this class include *Rhizopus* and *Mucor*. These fungi are found in the soil and live on decaying vegetation. The *Zygomycetes* fungi can often be found on the skin and coat of healthy cats and dogs but rarely cause any problems.

What are the symptoms of zygomycosis?

In animals that have compromised immune systems or are suffering from a debilitating disease, the fungi may cause infections. The infections appear as nodules in the skin and may be ulcerated and draining. Nodules can also occur in the gastrointestinal tract, lungs, liver, and lymph nodes. In these cases, vomiting, pneumonia, and jaundice, are the more common symptoms.

How is zygomycosis diagnosed?

If zygomycosis is suspected, it can be diagnosed through examining the fluid from the draining lesions under the microscope. The fungus can often be identified in the fluid or a biopsy of the nodule can be performed to confirm the diagnosis. There is an experimental blood test available to diagnose zygomycosis in people.

How is zygomycosis treated?

The treatment for cats and dogs usually consists of surgical removal of the nodules followed by medications including amphotericin B, benzimidazoles, or potassium iodide. While this is a rare condition, it is often fatal. Therefore, if you see draining skin nodules on your cat or dog, you should contact your veterinarian and rule out zygomycosis as a potential cause.

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