# Climate change fuels alarming rise of Aspergillosis across Europe



A concerning rise in the prevalence of Aspergillosis, a severe fungal infection, is emerging across Europe, attributed to the impacts of climate change. The disease poses a particular risk to millions, with its ability to significantly affect the respiratory system, leading to severe breathing difficulties. Experts predict that the ongoing rise in global temperatures is making northern European nations more vulnerable to this and similar infections.

The fungus responsible for Aspergillosis thrives in warmer climates, and its impending spread throughout Europe could exacerbate health challenges for individuals, especially those with pre-existing conditions such as asthma or cystic fibrosis. While treatment options exist, they may not suffice for everyone, particularly vulnerable populations. According to Norman van Rhijn, a Wellcome Trust research fellow at Manchester University, the consequences of this change could be drastic. Speaking to the Financial Times, he stated, "We're talking about hundreds of thousands of lives, and continental shifts in species distributions." He also warned that within 50 years, shifts in habitat will likely lead to significant changes in disease prevalence, saying, "In 50 years, where things grow and what you get infected by is going to be completely different."

Symptoms of Aspergillosis include breathlessness, coughing—potentially with blood or mucus—wheezing, fever, unintentional weight loss, and fatigue. Those suffering from existing lung conditions may observe a deterioration in their symptoms, which should prompt a consultation with a healthcare professional.

The rise in fungal infections is not confined to Aspergillosis. Globally, over 150 million severe fungal cases occur annually, resulting in approximately 1.7 million deaths. Treatments for infections caused by yeast and moulds are becoming less effective, raising alarm among health professionals. Professor Adilia Warris, co-director of the MRC Centre for Medical Mycology at Exeter University, emphasised the seriousness of these infections, noting that they often complicate existing health issues, thus not receiving the prominence they warrant in public discussions.

Aspergillosis and its related fungi, such as Aspergillus flavus—which can produce toxic compounds known as aflatoxins—are frequently found in the environment, particularly in soil, decaying vegetation, and even indoor environments where water damage is present. This also brings implications for food safety, as aflatoxins can contaminate stored food, posing further risks to health, including potential cancer-inducing effects.

The looming threat of Aspergillosis and other fungal infections necessitates heightened awareness and research, given the potential for significant health impacts across various demographics in Europe.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ft.com/content/506f5a03-8520-40e1-aee3-a6e6427f68c0> - This article discusses how rising global temperatures are expanding the reach of Aspergillus species, including A. fumigatus and A. flavus, into northern Europe, increasing the risk of aspergillosis and related health issues.
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/cb7803f4-4ca5-4eba-9c4e-3e95741c01c9> - This piece explores how climate change is facilitating the spread of fungal pathogens like Aspergillus, leading to increased incidence of infections such as aspergillosis in human populations.
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspergillosis> - This Wikipedia page provides comprehensive information on aspergillosis, including its causes, symptoms, and treatment options, corroborating the article's mention of the disease's impact on the respiratory system and available treatments.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspergillus_flavus> - This article details Aspergillus flavus, a species responsible for producing aflatoxins, which can contaminate food and pose health risks, aligning with the article's discussion on food safety concerns.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aflatoxin> - This page explains aflatoxins, toxic compounds produced by Aspergillus species, and their potential health effects, supporting the article's mention of aflatoxins contaminating stored food and posing health risks.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/506f5a03-8520-40e1-aee3-a6e6427f68c0> - This article highlights the urgency for increased research and healthcare preparedness to address the growing threat of fungal infections like aspergillosis, as emphasized in the original article.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/2051077/killer-fungus-spread-across-europe> - Please view link - unable to able to access data