

[IMAGE]

Pain Relief Gone Bad: Tainted Medication

By Editorial Staff

If you've been following the news lately, you're well-aware of the meningitis scare sweeping the nation. Currently, at least seven deaths and more than 90 cases of illness in nine states are attributed to spinal meningitis caused by contaminated steroid drugs injected into the spine for pain relief. What you may not have considered in all the commotion is that if these patients had received chiropractic spinal manipulation – a proven treatment for back pain – instead, they would not have been infected in the first place.

Meningitis is an infection / inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord; it can lead to neurological damage and death if not identified and appropriately treated promptly (with more drugs, by the way, which one hopes are not contaminated or cause side effects) . The steroids in question were contaminated with a fungus that apparently went undiscovered at the compounding pharmacy which produces the drug, and were distributed to at least 23 states.

While the details of why each patient infected or potentially infected with the contaminated medication was required to take it, we do know that millions of people receive steroid injections to their spine for pain. Keep in mind that even uncontaminated steroids may cause side effects ranging from mild to life-threatening – which is par for the course for just about every drug out there, unfortunately.

The bottom line is that patients need to be informed that alternatives exist when it comes to managing pain, particularly back pain. Drugs aren't the only choice, and as the current outbreak emphasizes, they can prove to be the wrong choice, with deadly consequences. How many patients who receive steroid injections to the spine are informed of drug-free alternatives for their back pain, such as chiropractic care? Seven patients – and counting – will never get that chance.

The next time your doctor prescribes a drug for pain or any other symptom / condition, make sure you inquire about the necessity of the medication, its potential side effects, and if natural alternatives exist that can be equally, if not more effective.

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