

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Interviewer: _____
Date: _____ Time: _____ AM/PM
Location: _____

Thank you for coming today! Your responses are very important to us. We will ask you questions about when you might have done certain things or traveled before you got sick. We want to ask you these questions so we can learn what might have caused your illness. We hope this can prevent other people from getting sick like you did. Please remember that all of your answers will be kept private and we will not share what you tell us with anyone.

Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Date of Positive Elizabethkingia Test: ___/___/_____

Section A. Time frame: Thirty days (approximately one month) prior to illness onset date.

For the first part of this discussion, we would like to focus on the thirty days, or approximately one month, before you got sick. [Show calendar visual aid, and point out time frame of question.] I will ask each of you about things you did and places you went from ___ and ___, during the month BEFORE you became ill. We know it might be hard to remember, so take your time in answering these questions. [Note to interviewer: Show calendar to participants before each section outlined below, and whenever asked, to remind them of the time frame in question.]

I. Travel

1. Did you travel anywhere outside where you live during the month before you became ill?
 - a. Where did you go?
 - b. For how long did you travel during each of these trips?
2. How did you spend your time during each of these trips?
 - a. Did you participate in any outdoor activities?
 - b. Do you think you might have been close to animal feces (poop) during any of these activities?
 - c. What did you eat or drink on these trips...
 - i. That you usually have on a regular basis?
 - ii. For a special occasion?
 - iii. Did you go to any restaurants?
 - iv. Did you have any...
 1. Special drinks or sodas?
 2. Local dairy products, like milk, cheese, or yogurt?
 3. Meats?
 - d. Did you go to any social gatherings?

II. Hobbies/Social gatherings

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1. How did you spend your free time from ___ and ___ when you were not traveling? I'm referring to the month before you became ill. Did you:
2. Where did you participate in these activities?
3. How often did you participate in these activities?
4. Were you exposed to any animal feces (poop) while participating in any of these activities?
(applicable for outdoor activities only)
5. Did you go to any social gatherings?
 - a. What did you do during these gatherings?
 - b. What you eat or drink at these gatherings?

III. Employment

1. Did you work or volunteer outside your home from ___ to ___, during the month before you became ill?
2. What kind of work did you do on a daily basis? Describe what your typical day was like.
3. Did you interact with many people around you? Do you remember if any of these people were ill?
4. Were you exposed to any sawdust or other small particles or chemicals while working?

IV. Consumption of foods and drinks

1. What did you eat and drink on a typical day from ___ to ___, during the month before you became ill?
2. Did you go to any restaurants during this time?
3. Did you eat any local foods in the area?

V. Other daily activities

Medical treatments and history

1. Could you talk about any treatments or medications you received during ___ and ___, about a month before you became ill?
2. Did you become ill with any other infections before you got sick with Elizabethkingia?
3. Did anyone close to you, like a family member or friend get sick during the month before you became ill?
4. Do you have any long-term chronic illnesses or medical conditions?
5. Did you have any other medical conditions during ___ and ___, about a month before you became ill?

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Caregiver involvement

1. Do you have someone help take care of you during the day or in the evenings? (If yes, see below)
2. Could you tell me a little about this person - where you met and how often you see each other?
3. Did this person become ill during the month before you became ill?
4. May we speak with this person a little more about some of their activities around the time you might have gotten sick? [Prompt for contact information if relevant]

Miscellaneous

1. Did it snow during ___ and ___, about a month before you became ill? If so, did you or someone else shovel snow from around where you live? If so, did you or they use any products to shovel the snow?
2. Did you have any home deliveries during ___ and ___, about a month before you became ill?
 - a. Regular delivery of packaged foods, medicines, etc?
 - b. Special deliveries of gifts or ordered items?
3. Did you take any free samples of items, such as foods, drinks lotions, soaps from any stores or through the mail during ___ and ___?

Section B. Time frame: November 2015 to illness onset date.

Thank you for all of the information you have given me so far! For the next part of this discussion, we would like to focus on the time from November 2015 (just after Halloween) to when you became ill. [Show calendar visual aid, and point out time frame of question.]

I will ask each of you about things you did and places you went around from ___ and ___, BEFORE you became ill. We know it might be hard to remember, so take your time in answering these questions. [Note to interviewer: Show calendar to participants before each section outlined below, and whenever asked, to remind them of the time frame in question.]

First, we will talk about the month of November 2015 [refer to calendar visual aid and relevant holidays and events around that time].

1. Did you travel anywhere during this time? If so, where?
2. Including the time that you traveled, did you:
 - a. Eat out at any restaurants during this time?
 - b. Eat any local foods:
 - c. Go to any social gatherings, such as family functions?
 - d. Did you spend any time outdoors? If so, what kind of outdoor activities did you participate in?

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- e. Did you work or volunteer? If so, what was the nature of your work?
- f. Were you ill at any point during this time?
 - i. Were you hospitalized?
 - ii. Did you take any medications?
- g. Did you have a caregiver during this month?
 - i. How much time did this caregiver spend with you?
 - ii. What kind of tasks did the caregiver help you with?
 - iii. May we reach out to the caregiver if we have any questions?
- h. Did it snow during this month?
 - i. Did you shovel snow around the area where you live?
 - ii. What kind of products for melting snow and ice did you use around your home?
e.g., kitty litter, gravel, salt
- i. Do you remember receiving any home deliveries during this time? This could involve food delivery or delivery of goods like lotions, shampoos, etc.

[Repeat the above section for each month until month of illness.]