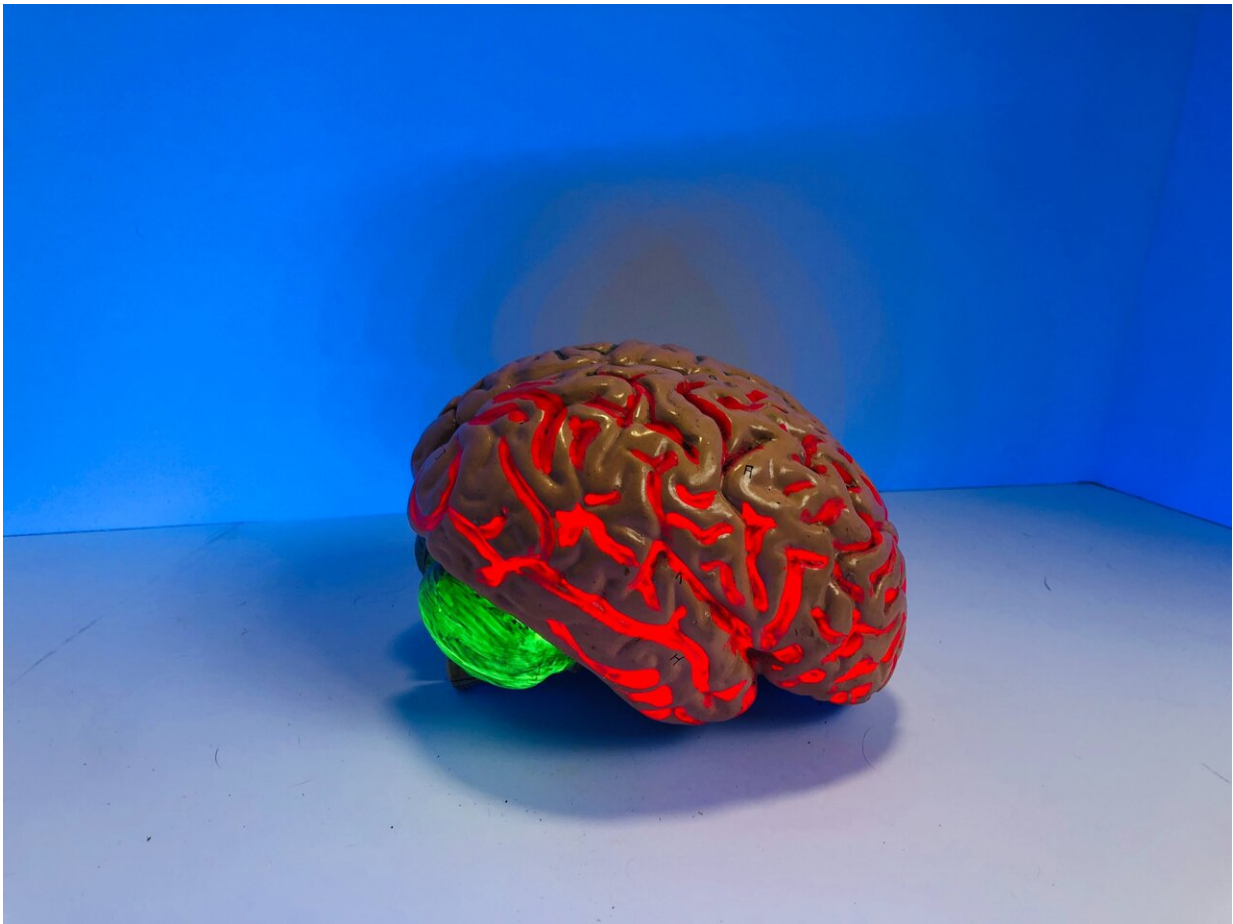


Video: Immune system attacks brain-eating amoeba

September 9 2021, by Veronique Koch



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Naegleria fowleri—commonly known as "the brain-eating

amoeba"—can be found in warm fresh water. It's a single-celled, free swimming animal that reaches the brain through the nasal passageway by traveling up the olfactory nerve.

This can happen when people swim in contaminated water or even when they use a Neti pot to irrigate their nose with under-treated water.

While this amoeba is rare, it is almost universally fatal once it infects the brain. The symptoms are like those of viral or [bacterial meningitis](#) in that the brain suffers from traumatic inflammation, which usually leads to death.

Ashley Moseman, Ph.D., an immunologist at Duke University, is studying the body's [immune response](#) to *N. fowleri* and hopes to one day be able to guide the immune response to target amoeba without the damaging inflammation. For now, the best chance at survival is early treatment.

Moseman hopes that increasing awareness of this brain-eating amoeba among both [medical staff](#) and potential victims will lead to more effective early diagnosis. Screening for meningitis-like symptoms that appear following freshwater exposure may increase chances of survival.

You can learn more about *Naegleria fowleri* [here](#).

Provided by Duke University

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