



How can I reduce the risk of Valley Fever?

The best way to reduce the risk is to avoid breathing in dirt or dust in places where Valley Fever is common.

Below are some common sense recommendations that may help:

When it is windy and the air is dusty, especially during dust storms:

- Stay inside and keep windows and doors closed.
- While driving, keep car windows shut and use “recirculating” air conditioning if available.
- If you must be outdoors, consider wearing an N95 mask or respirator (available at drug and hardware stores).

When working or playing in areas with open dirt:

- Wet down soil before disturbing it to reduce dust.
- Consider wearing an N95 mask.

Contact your local health department or visit the following websites for more information on Valley Fever:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Coccidioidomycosis.aspx>

<http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/coccidioidomycosis/index.html>

For proper fitting of an N95 mask:

http://youtu.be/0d_RaKdqeck



What you need to know about Valley Fever in California



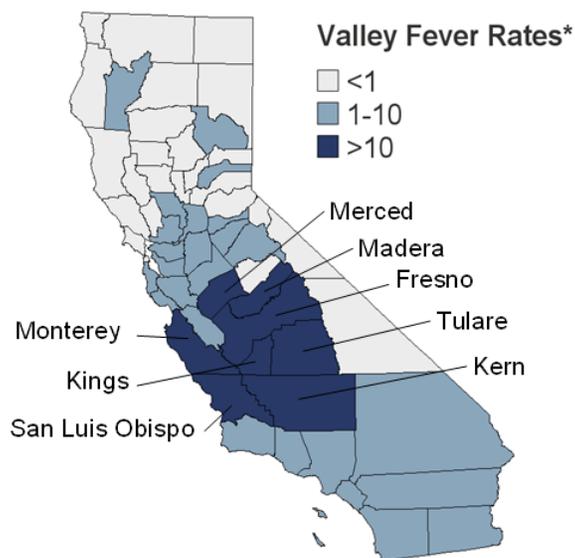
What is Valley Fever?

Valley Fever (*coccidioidomycosis* or “cocci”) is an illness caused by a fungus that lives in the soil and dirt. It can infect the lungs and cause flu-like symptoms or severe illness.

When and where do people get Valley Fever?

Valley Fever infection can occur year-round. In California, it has been reported from most counties, but especially from the San Joaquin (Central) Valley.

Anyone who lives in, works in, or visits a place with Valley Fever can be infected.



*Average of annual rates from 2008-2012 per 100,000 population

How do people get Valley Fever?

People can get sick by breathing in a form of the Valley Fever fungus called spores. Spores are too small to be seen. They can get into the air with dust when it is windy or when dirt is disturbed.

Valley Fever cannot be spread from one person to another.

What are the symptoms of Valley Fever?

About 60% of infected people will not get sick. People who do get sick can have symptoms that last a month or more.

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Cough
- Chest pain
- Muscle or joint aches
- Headaches
- Weight loss
- Rash

Valley Fever can also infect the brain, joints, bone, skin, or other organs. This type of infection is rare. It can be very serious and sometimes fatal.

Most people who get Valley Fever fully recover and are usually protected from getting Valley Fever again.

How is Valley Fever diagnosed and treated?

Valley Fever is diagnosed by a doctor. Your doctor can order a blood test, chest x-ray, or other tests. If you are diagnosed with Valley Fever, your doctor will determine if you need treatment with antifungal medications.

Are some people at risk for Valley Fever?

Anyone can get Valley Fever, even young and healthy people. People who disturb dirt or soil when playing or working (e.g., construction, farming, or military work) in the Central Valley may be at risk of infection. Some groups are at greater risk for severe Valley Fever including:

- Older adults (60 years and older)
- African Americans, Filipinos, Hispanics
- Pregnant women
- Persons with diabetes
- Persons with conditions that weaken their immune system such as: cancer, HIV, chemotherapy or steroids treatment, or organ transplant