

VALLEY FEVER Q & A

**DO I HAVE
VALLEY FEVER OR
COVID-19?**

VALLEY FEVER and **COVID-19** share many of the same symptoms, including fever, cough, fatigue, and body aches. If you are experiencing these symptoms, isolate yourself from others and contact your healthcare provider immediately. Laboratory tests are needed to know whether symptoms are caused by COVID-19 or Valley fever. Usually, Valley fever is diagnosed using a blood test, but the lab test for COVID-19 uses a respiratory sample from your nose or throat.

**IS VALLEY FEVER
STILL A PROBLEM IN
CALIFORNIA?**

YES. The number of reported Valley fever cases in California has greatly increased in recent years. Since 2000, the number of cases has increased from less than 1,000 cases to more than 9,000 cases in 2019.

**IS VALLEY FEVER
FOUND ONLY IN THE
CENTRAL VALLEY?**

NO. While most cases of Valley fever in California are reported in people who live in the Central Valley or Central Coast, it has been diagnosed in people living throughout California. More and more cases have also been recently reported in Central and Southern California.

**CAN I GET VALLEY
FEVER FROM
SOMEONE WHO IS
SICK WITH VALLEY
FEVER?**

NO. Valley fever is not contagious, meaning it can't spread from one person to another. You can't get or spread Valley fever by touching or being around another person or animal that is sick with Valley fever.

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CAN I GET VALLEY FEVER FROM BEING EXPOSED TO PESTICIDES?

NO. Valley fever is caused by breathing in the Valley fever fungus from dust in outdoor air, not from pesticides. This fungus grows in the dirt and soil and does not come from pesticides that are sprayed on crops and farmland.

CAN MY PETS GET VALLEY FEVER?

YES. Pets, including cats and dogs, can get Valley fever. Valley fever in dogs is similar to Valley fever in humans. If you're concerned about your pet's risk of getting Valley fever, or if you think your pet has Valley fever, please talk to a veterinarian.

IF I WAS BORN IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY, AM I IMMUNE TO VALLEY FEVER?

NO. Even if you've lived in California's Central Valley your whole life and have never been sick from it, you can still get Valley fever. Anyone who lives in or travels to areas where Valley fever has been reported can get Valley fever. Valley fever can affect adults and children of any age, even if they are healthy.

Certain groups of people are more likely to get very sick from Valley fever if they get it. Learn more about groups at risk for severe Valley fever: **CouldBeValleyFever.org**.

IF I'VE ALREADY HAD VALLEY FEVER, AM I IMMUNE TO IT AND CAN'T GET SICK AGAIN?

IT DEPENDS. If you've already had Valley fever, your immune system will most likely protect you from getting it again. However, in rare cases where a person's immune system is weakened because of a health condition like cancer, organ transplant, or autoimmune disease, then that person may get Valley fever again.

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HOW MUCH DUST DO I NEED TO BREATHE IN TO GET VALLEY FEVER?

You can get Valley fever from just **ONE BREATH OF DUST** from outdoor air that contains spores of the Valley fever fungus.

WILL WEARING ANY TYPE OF FACE MASK HELP PREVENT VALLEY FEVER?

Wearing a properly fitted, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved respirator (mask) with particulate filters rated N95, N99, N100, P100, or HEPA may help protect you from breathing in dust and spores that can cause Valley fever. Cloth face masks, simple dust masks (with just one strap), KN95s (not certified by NIOSH), and household fabrics, such as washcloths, bandanas, and handkerchiefs, do not provide the same level of protection as N95 or higher-rated respirators. If your work involves dusty environments or soil disturbing activities, learn more about Valley fever safety in the workplace.