

VALLEY FEVER (Coccidioidomycosis)



Valley Fever is a fungal infection caused by *Coccidioides*. It is found in the southwestern U.S. (Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah), as well as in Central and South America. Valley Fever or “Cocci,” short for Coccidioidomycosis, most often causes no symptoms, or only a mild flu-like illness. People with a weakened immune system are affected much more severely, such as those who have had an organ transplant, pregnant women, or individuals with diabetes.



How is it spread?

- ▶ *Coccidioides* usually lives in dirt or dust of certain areas with a hot, dry climate.
- ▶ Certain activities can put you at risk for breathing in the spores such as:
 - ▶ Working in construction, excavation, or landscaping.
 - ▶ Biking or riding an ATV that disturbs the soil.
- ▶ Valley Fever is not spread between people or animals.



What are the signs and symptoms?

Most people who have Valley Fever have no symptoms or mild flu-like ones. Those who do get sick may have:

- ▶ Fever or night sweats
- ▶ Cough
- ▶ Feeling very tired
- ▶ Chest pain
- ▶ Muscle or joint aches
- ▶ Loss of appetite



What are the treatment options?

- ▶ Many people will recover without treatment.
- ▶ People are usually treated with antifungal medicine. The medication will need to be taken for several months.
- ▶ Antibiotics do not work for Valley Fever.



How can it be prevented?

When traveling to areas where Valley Fever is found, take the following precautions:

- ▶ Try to avoid areas like excavation or construction sites where dust is in the air.
- ▶ Stay indoors with windows shut during dust storms and use air filtration systems.
- ▶ Avoid gardening, yard work, or digging if a lot of dust and dirt will be released into the air.

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