

What is being done about Valley Fever?

Valley Fever is a serious disease that affects thousands of people in Arizona and the Southwest. We need to understand more about its causes, treatment and prevention.

- The Arizona Department of Health Services is investigating Valley Fever to learn more about how people get the disease and how they are affected by it. This information is used to educate health care providers and the public about how to diagnose and control the disease.
- The Valley Fever Center for Excellence (VFCE) promotes research, education and improved patient care. Currently the VFCE is conducting clinical trials on a new Valley Fever medication, nikkomycin Z.
- Medical researchers are working to develop a vaccine for Valley Fever.

What can I do about Valley Fever?

- If you think you might have Valley Fever, ask your doctor to test you.
- If you are diagnosed with Valley Fever you might be eligible to be in a clinical trial. Contact the Valley Fever Center for Excellence at: (520) 629-4777.
- Talk to your veterinarian about how Valley Fever affects your pets.
- Support Valley Fever research and awareness. Tax-free donations can be mailed to The Valley Fever Center for Excellence. Phone: (520) 629-4777. Checks should be made payable to The University of Arizona.

Where can I go for more information?

For more information about Valley Fever visit these websites:

- The Arizona Department of Health Services Valley Fever website: www.valleyfeverarizona.org
- The Valley Fever Center for Excellence website: www.vfce.arizona.edu

If you have questions, contact:



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Cough? Fever?

Exhausted?

Valley Fever?

Coccidioidomycosis



Photo courtesy of Rob Schumacher, The Arizona Republic, June 7, 2006

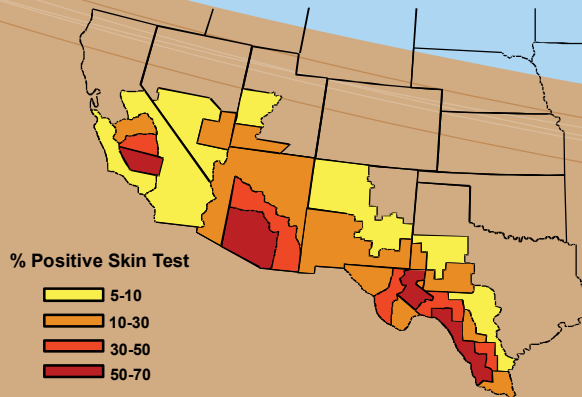
What is Valley Fever?

Valley Fever (coccidioidomycosis) is a disease caused by a fungus in the soil in the Southwest region of the United States. The fungus is also found in parts of Mexico and Central and South America.

People may get sick if they breathe in the fungus. The fungus gets into the air from wind, dust storms, digging and other activities. It can infect the lungs and other parts of the body.

The scientific name for the fungus is *Coccidioides*.

Areas of Valley Fever Activity in the United States



P. Q. Edwards et al. *Dis.Chest* 31:35-60, 1957.

Who gets Valley Fever?

Anyone who visits or lives in areas where Valley Fever occurs can contract Valley Fever. Pets and other animals can get Valley Fever, too.

What are the symptoms of Valley Fever?

Most people (60%) may have only mild symptoms or no symptoms and never know they have Valley Fever. The rest have illness that may last for months or even years. Common symptoms are:

- Fever
- Cough
- Tiredness
- Headaches
- Joint / muscle aches
- Rash
- Night sweats
- Weight loss / lack of appetite

The disease usually affects the lungs, but in some people the disease may spread to other parts of the body such as the bones, skin, joints or brain. In these cases, the disease can be very serious and may even cause death.

How is Valley Fever diagnosed?

Your regular doctor can order a blood test for Valley Fever. Your doctor may also test other body fluids, use a chest x-ray or do a biopsy to see if you have Valley Fever. Valley Fever sometimes causes pneumonia. If you have pneumonia ask your doctor about Valley Fever testing.

Is Valley Fever contagious?

No. People with Valley Fever are not contagious. It is not spread from person to person.

How is Valley Fever treated?

Many people who have Valley Fever don't need treatment because their body can fight the disease. Doctors may treat seriously ill people with anti-fungal drugs.

Who is more likely to get serious Valley Fever illness?

People more likely to get *serious* illness include:

- African-Americans and Filipinos
- Pregnant women
- People whose bodies have trouble fighting off disease, including people with:
 - HIV or AIDS
 - Cancer
 - Diabetes
 - Organ or bone marrow transplant
 - People taking drugs or treatments that may reduce the body's ability to fight disease, such as chemotherapy or steroid therapy