

## WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For more information contact:

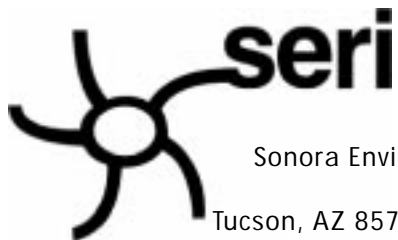
Pima County Health Department  
Disease Control Department  
740-8315

Valley Fever Center for Excellence  
Twenty-four hour hotline  
520-629-4777

Pima County Department of Environmental Quality  
Complaint hotline  
740-4249

Ramon Estrada  
CASA Program Coordinator  
Child & Family Resources, Inc.  
881-8940

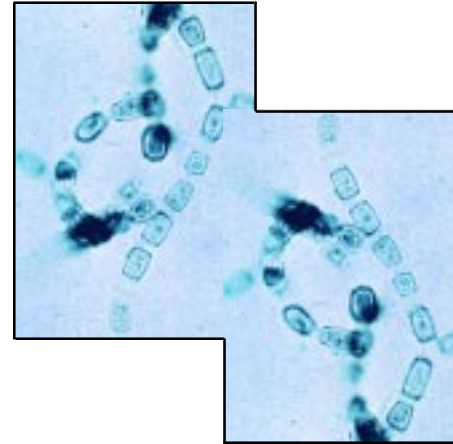
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# VALLEY FEVER



What is it?

How is it spread?

What are my chances of getting it?

What are the symptoms?

How can I prevent getting it?



## WHAT IS IT?

Valley Fever is a fungus that grows and lives in the soil throughout the southwestern desert regions of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah; northern Mexico, and portions of Central and South America. The scientific name for valley fever fungus is coccidioidomycosis, or cocci for short. The valley fever fungus is most prevalent between June and November. If you inhale the valley fever spores, you may develop a lung infection.

## HOW IS IT SPREAD?

When the soil is disturbed by either the wind, construction, digging or driving on unpaved roads, the spores of the valley fever fungus are released into the air.

Once in the air, the spores are inhaled as dust, and they begin growing and multiplying in your lungs.

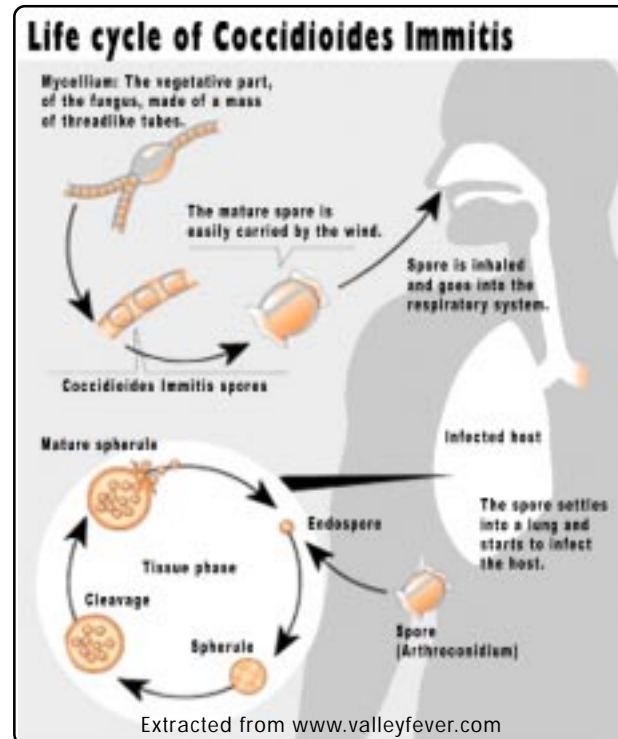
Valley fever cannot be passed from animal to person, or from person to person, nor can you obtain it from drinking water or from eating foods grown in the desert soils harboring the fungus.

## WHAT ARE MY CHANCES OF GETTING IT?

If you live or vacation in the desert regions where the fungus resides, you are very likely to get valley fever. However, once you have had valley fever, unless your immune system changes drastically, you will have developed a lifelong immunity to the fungus.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Most people who inhale the spores will not have any symptoms at all. Within one to three weeks after inhalation, some people will experience flu-like symptoms (including a headache, fever, cough, fatigue, muscle and joint aches, night sweats, and/or a skin rash). These symptoms will usually get better on their own and be gone within a couple of months.



A very small percentage of immuno-compromised individuals will develop pneumonia and require medical attention. Symptoms could last six months or more. In an even smaller percentage of people, the infection will spread to other parts of their body. Symptoms could last months to years and may even result in death. The symptoms of valley fever can be misdiagnosed by your doctor as tuberculosis or cancer, so be sure to request a specific blood test for valley fever.

## HOW CAN I PREVENT GETTING IT?

Although you cannot actually prevent getting valley fever, you can minimize your risk by taking the following precautions:

- Wet soil before digging.
- Report construction companies who are not wetting down the soil on their job site to PDEQ at 740-4249.
- If driving on unpaved roads, drive with the windows up and the vents closed.
- If an immuno-compromised individual, wear a dust mask capable of filtering out particles as small as 0.4  $\mu\text{m}$ .
- Dust your home often with a damp cloth and mop.