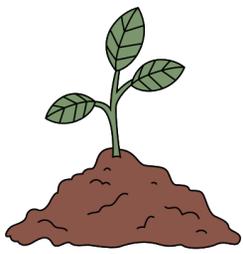


# VALLEY FEVER:

## COCCIDIOIDOMYCOSIS



Updated 01/28/2026



### What is Valley Fever?

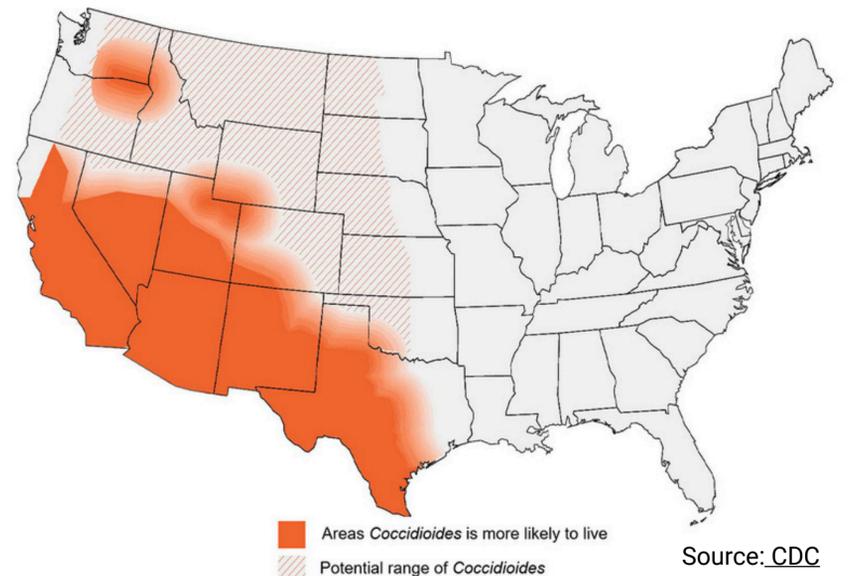
Valley fever (coccidioidomycosis) is a lung infection that is caused by *Coccidioides* spores, this fungus lives in the soil in the Pacific Northwest and southwestern U.S., as well as parts of Mexico, Central, and South America.

### How do people get sick?

People can get Valley fever if they breathe in the spores from *Coccidioides*. This can happen in occupations and during activities that increase exposure to dust, such as construction work, agricultural work, archeology, and military training. This can also happen during natural events such as dust storms and earthquakes.

Montana averages about 20 cases of Valley fever reported per year; cases are typically exposed to the spores during travel.

Estimated areas for *Coccidioides* in the United States



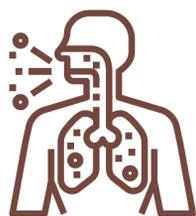
Source: [CDC](#)

### Symptoms & Complications

Some people who are diagnosed with Valley fever will never develop symptoms. Individuals who do experience symptoms will usually develop those symptoms 1 to 3 weeks after their exposure and describe the symptoms as being flu-like.

Symptoms may include:

- Fatigue
- Cough
- Fever or Chills
- Headache
- Shortness of breath



Approximately 5-10% of people who have Valley fever symptoms will develop serious or long-term complications due to their illness, including:

- Scar tissue or nodules in the lungs
- Painful and swollen joints
- A rash on the front of their shins that is painful, warm to the touch, and red or purplish in color. These rashes will be circular and 1-5 cm in diameter.

### Treatment & Recovery

For most people, the symptoms of Valley fever will go away on their own within a few months without any medication.

Healthcare providers may prescribe antifungal medications for individuals with or at risk of severe infections.

### Prevention

When traveling or living in a place where the fungus is present in the soil:

- Avoid dusty areas such as construction/excavation sites. If unavoidable, wear a fitted N95 respirator while on-site,
- Stay inside and close windows when it is windy outside and the air is dusty,
- Wet soil before disturbing it to reduce dust,
- Clean skin injuries well using soap and water.