

VALLEY FEVER (COCCIDIOIDOMYCOSIS)

Valley Fever in Washington

Valley Fever, also called coccidioidomycosis, is an infection caused by the fungus *Coccidioides*. The fungus lives in soil in some areas, including the southwestern United States and south-central Washington.

How can I get it?

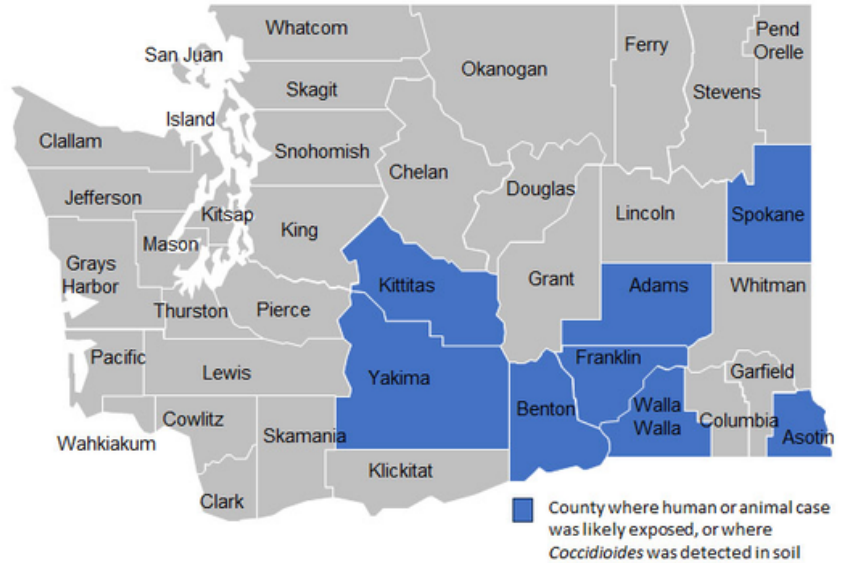
People and animals can get Valley Fever by breathing in spores, generally from dust or disturbed soil, in areas where the fungus is found. Most people who breathe in spores do not get sick, but some people develop mild or severe forms of the disease.

What are the symptoms?

About 6 out of 10 people who are infected with the fungus will never have symptoms. Other people may have mild symptoms that usually go away on their own after weeks to months.

Symptoms of Valley Fever include:

- Headache
- Night sweats
- Muscle aches or joint pain
- Rash
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Cough
- Fever
- Shortness of breath



Where is Valley Fever found?

- *Coccidioides immitis* has been found in soils of south-central Washington.
- Environmental sampling efforts have found the fungus in soil from Benton, Kittitas, and Yakima counties. Limited sampling has been done in other counties, so the full geographic range of the fungus is still undefined.

Prevention and Risk

Who is at risk?

- Anyone who lives in or travels to areas where *Coccidioides* is present in the environment can get Valley Fever.
- Valley Fever is most common in adults aged 60 and older but can affect people of any age.
- Those at higher risk for severe illness include people with weakened immune systems, pregnant people, people who have diabetes, and people taking chronic corticosteroid therapy.
- Data also suggest that risk of Valley Fever infection may be greater for people of American Indian or Alaska Native descent and the risk of severe disease may be greater among people who are Black or Filipino.

How can I prevent Valley Fever?

While it is difficult to avoid breathing in fungal spores, people who live in areas with Valley Fever can:

- Avoid spending time in dusty places
- Close windows and doors to prevent dust
- Use air filtration in homes and vehicles



If you suspect you have Valley Fever, contact your healthcare provider.

