



COUNTY OF MONTEREY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Health Advisory

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Coccidioidomycosis Increasing Locally

Current Situation

County of Monterey Health Department has received an increasing number of reports of Coccidioidomycosis, also known as Valley Fever, in recent weeks. There have been 225 new cases of coccidioidomycosis reported among Monterey County residents in 2024 to date, compared to 147 cases in 2023. Many individuals with recent illness experienced severe disease and delays in diagnosis and treatment. Public health officials urge medical providers to include coccidioidomycosis in their differential diagnoses when evaluating patients with progressive respiratory illness, lingering cough, and/or cough not responding to antibiotic and antiviral treatment.

Recommendations for Health Care Providers

- **Be aware of symptoms and risk factors for severe illness.**
 - Following an incubation period of one to four weeks, clinical manifestations occur in 40% of infected individuals and include one or more of the following: influenza-like illness, pneumonia or other pulmonary lesion, erythema nodosum or erythema multiforme rash.
 - Disseminated infection, which can be fatal, most commonly involves skin and soft tissues, bones, joints, and the central nervous system.
 - Once infected, African-Americans, Filipinos, and other Asians are at higher risk of developing more serious or disseminated illness. Women in their third trimester of pregnancy, diabetics, and immunocompromised individuals are also at higher risk of serious illness.
- **Take a risk history that includes occupation.**
 - Though all of Monterey County is considered a coccidioidomycosis endemic area, certain occupational groups including agricultural workers, construction workers, military personnel, archeologists, and wildland firefighters may be at increased risk for exposure.
- **Test for cocci.**
 - Fungal cultures and/or coccidioidal serologic testing using immunodiffusion and complement fixation should be considered. These tests are available at most commercial labs, Kern County Public Health Laboratory, and the University of California Davis' Coccidioidomycosis Serology Laboratory. County of Monterey Public Health Laboratory offers a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) for cocci (e.g., from sputum and bronchial wash specimens).
- **Report all confirmed, probable, and suspect cases** to the County of Monterey Health Department.
 - Download blank Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) forms at:
<https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-h/health/public-health/communicable-disease-unit>.

For more information about testing and reporting, please contact the County of Monterey Health Department's Communicable Disease Unit at 831-755-4521. For information about submitting patients' specimens to the County of Monterey Public Health Laboratory, call 831-755-4516. Additional information is available at <https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-h/health/diseases/coccidioidomycosis-valley-fever> and https://www.cdc.gov/valley-fever/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/coccidioidomycosis/index.html.

Health Alert: Warrants immediate action or attention. **Health Advisory:** Provides information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action. **Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.