

IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

COCCIDIOIDOMYCOSIS

Coccidiomycosis is an influenza-like disease with fever that causes respiratory symptoms, but can spread to other organs. The disease is caused by a group of fungi called *Coccidioides*. *Coccidioidomycosis* may also be called coccidioidal granuloma, desert fever, desert rheumatism, Posada's disease, San Joaquin fever, or Valley fever.

Symptoms

More than half of people with coccidioidomycosis have no symptoms. Those who do may have:

- Fever
- Cough
- Headache
- Rash
- Body ache
- Some people develop chronic lung infection
- 1/1,000 people develop a widespread infection that may affect nerves, tissues, joints, or bone.

Transmission

- The fungi that cause coccidioidomycosis live in the soil in the Southwest United States, Mexico, Central and South America.
- The fungi reproduce by airborne spores. A person who inhales the spores may become infected.
- Most of the people who get the disease are people who live in or visit places where the fungus is in the soil and who engage in activities that expose them to dust (such as construction, agricultural work, military field training and archeological exploration).
- Coccidioidomycosis does not spread between people. The infectious form only grows in the environment. It changes its form when it infects a person, and this form cannot be transmitted.

Treatment

- Skin or blood tests are used to diagnose the disease
- Most cases recover without treatment. People with severe illness can be treated with anti-fungal medications by a health care provider.
- Some people are at increased risk for developing more serious disease: people of African-American, Asian or Filipino descent appear to be at increased risk, as do pregnant women during the third trimester and people with weakened immune systems.

Prevention

- Limit exposure to dust in the Southwest United States, Mexico, Central and South America (where the disease-causing fungi are usually found).

Additional Information

Coccidioidomycosis is rare among Ohioans. It is found among travelers to the southwestern United States, Mexico, Central and South America.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



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