



# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

PO BOX 962, 1060 EMELINE AVE., SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962  
PHONE: (831) 454-4114 AFTER HOURS: (831) 471-1170 FAX: (831) 454-5049 TDD: 711

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASE UNIT

## PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

**Subject:** *Coccidioidomycosis Increasing in Monterey County*

Date: November 16, 2016

Contact: Santa Cruz County Public Health / Communicable Disease Unit  
(831) 454 - 4114

*Health officials urge medical providers to include Coccidioidomycosis in their differential diagnoses when evaluating patients with progressive respiratory illness especially among patients with exposure to Monterey County.*

### **SITUATION:**

Coccidioidomycosis, also known as Valley Fever, results from inhalation of *Coccidioides immitis* and *Coccidioides posadasii* spores. Although Santa Cruz County does not have any locally-acquired cases and is not considered endemic, Monterey County is a *Coccidioides* endemic area -- particularly the Salinas Valley and South County regions. In October 2016, an unusually high number of Coccidioidomycosis cases among Monterey County residents were reported by local medical providers. Some individuals were severely ill and required extensive medical care. At this time, Public Health Officials recommend medical providers:

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Be aware of symptoms and risk factors for severe disease.**
  - 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 (e.g., fever, chest pain, cough, myalgia, arthralgia, and/or headache); 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 high risk of serious disease.
- **Take a risk history that includes occupation.**
  - Certain occupational groups including agricultural workers, construction workers, military personnel, and wildland firefighters may be at increased risk for exposure.

- **Test for cocci.**
  - Coccidioidomycosis may be difficult to distinguish from bacterial and other respiratory infections.
  - Fungal cultures and/or coccidioidal serologic testing using immunodiffusion and complement fixation should be considered. These are available at most commercial labs and through the University of California Davis' Coccidioidomycosis Serology Laboratory.
- **Report all confirmed, probable, and suspect cases.**
  - Blank Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) forms can be downloaded at: [www.SantaCruzHealth.org/CDUnit](http://www.SantaCruzHealth.org/CDUnit)

### **INFORMATION:**

For more information about testing, diagnosing, and reporting, please contact the County of Santa Cruz, Public Health Department's Communicable Disease Unit at (831) 454-4114. Additional information is available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/coccidioidomycosis/index.html>

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**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important 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.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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**Santa Cruz County**