

Community Announcement from San Joaquin County Public Health Services

Increases in Cases of Valley Fever in Tracy and Surrounding Communities

Stockton, CA (May 29, 2024) – San Joaquin County Public Health Services is notifying residents in and around Tracy to be aware of increased rates of Valley Fever. San Joaquin County overall is seeing increased Valley Fever cases, and the greatest number, by far, is occurring in the Tracy area. In the epidemiological analysis of the past four years, Tracy has more cases than all the other cities in San Joaquin County combined.

Valley Fever, also known as coccidioidomycosis, or “cocci”, is caused by breathing in the spores of a fungus that grows in soil and dirt. The fungal spores, which are too small to see, can be present in dust that gets into the air when it is windy or when soil is disturbed, such as when digging during construction or landscaping, according to the CDPH’s Occupational Health Branch. This fungus often infects the lungs and can cause acute respiratory symptoms including cough, fever, chest pain, and/or fatigue. While most cases have mild symptoms, the infection can also produce severe symptoms that require hospitalization and can also lead to death.

A person can reduce their risk of Valley Fever exposure by taking precautionary steps to avoid breathing in dust:

- When it is windy outside and the air is dusty, stay indoors and keep windows and doors closed.
- While driving, keep car windows closed and use recirculating air conditioning, if available.
- If individuals must be outdoors in dusty areas, they should consider wearing a properly fitted N-95 mask.

San Joaquin County Public Health Services encourages Tracy residents to learn about the signs and symptoms of Valley Fever and the ways to reduce the risk of infection. Employers with outdoor workers should train workers about symptoms and take steps to limit workers' exposure to airborne dust, such as watering down soil before digging. Also, those engaged in off-road recreational activities, where airborne dust exposure is common, should have goggles and mask protection.

For additional information on Valley Fever, visit CDPH’s Valley Fever website, www.CouldBeValleyFever.org.

SJC Public Health Services: www.sjcphs.org