



COUNTY OF MONTEREY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Administration Clinic Services
Behavioral Health Emergency Medical Services Public Health
Environmental Health/Animal Services Public Administrator/Public Guardian

Nationally Accredited for Providing Quality Health Services

Health Advisory

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Increase in Local Coccidioidomycosis-Associated Deaths

Current Situation

Nine coccidioidomycosis-associated deaths were reported in 2018, compared to only three deaths in 2015 to 2017 combined. The rate of coccidioidomycosis disease among Monterey County residents is also rising, with 54.7 cases per 100,000 reported in 2018. Coccidioidomycosis is most prevalent from September through March. Monterey County Health Officer Dr. Edward Moreno urges medical providers to include coccidioidomycosis in their differential diagnoses when evaluating patients with progressive respiratory illness, to avoid delayed diagnosis which puts patients at increased risk of complications and death.

Opportunities to Learn More about Coccidioidomycosis

If your hospital or medical group is interested in attending an educational workshop on Valley Fever, contact Brandon Gates at 831-755-4698.

Recommendations for Health Care Providers

- **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 may include: 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 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 Coccidioides.**
 - Fungal cultures and/or coccidioidal serologic testing using immunodiffusion and complement fixation should be considered. These are available at most commercial labs, Kern County Public Health Laboratory, and the University of California Davis' Coccidioidomycosis Serology Laboratory. Monterey County Public Health Laboratory offers Nucleic Acid Amplification (NAA) testing for cocci (e.g., sputum and bronchial wash specimens).
- **Report all confirmed, probable, and suspect cases.**
 - Blank Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) forms can be downloaded at: www.mtyhd.org, along with educational brochures for your patients in English, Spanish, and Tagalog (www.mtyhd.org/cocci).

For information about testing, diagnosing, and reporting, please contact the Monterey County Health Department's Communicable Disease Unit at 831-755-4521. For information about submitting patient specimens to the Monterey County Public Health Laboratory, call 831-755-4516. Additional information is available at www.mtyhd.org/cocci and <http://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.