

A VACCINE FOR VALLEY FEVER

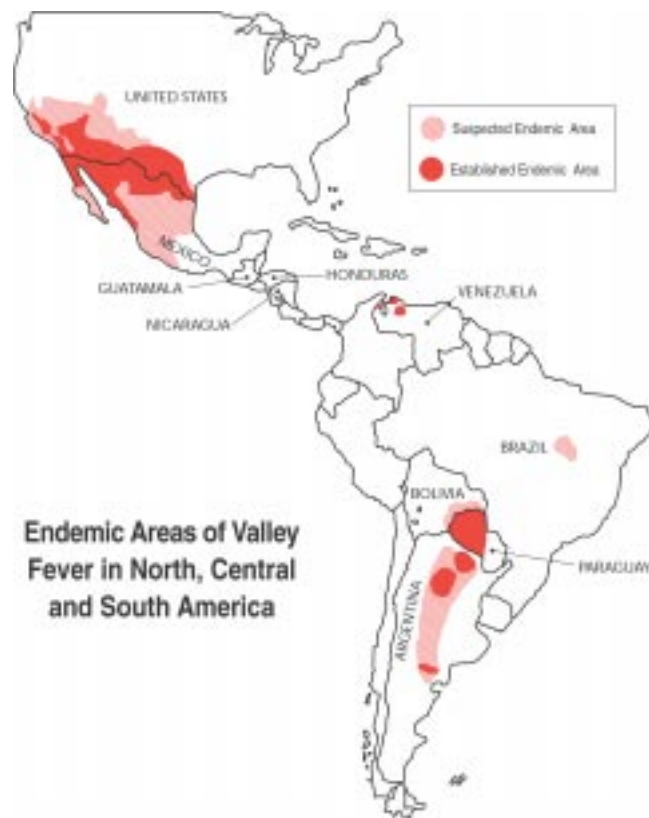
Valley Fever has long plagued – and mystified – man. Although it has been studied for the past 100 years, it is a disease that has remained impossible to control and difficult to treat. The development of a vaccine is considered the only way to prevent this disease that costs so much... not only in terms of dollars, but also in human suffering.

WHAT IS IT?

The technical name for Valley Fever is *Coccidioidomycosis*, or “Cocci” for short. It is caused by *Coccidioides immitis*, a fungus somewhat like yeast or mildew which lives in the soil. The tiny seeds, or spores, become wind-borne and are inhaled into the lungs, where the infection starts. Valley Fever is not contagious from person to person. It appears that after one exposure, the body develops immunity.

Valley Fever is a sickness of degree. About 60 percent of the people who breathe the spores do not get sick at all. For some, it may feel like a cold or flu. For those sick enough to go to the doctor, it can be serious, with pneumonia-like symptoms, requiring medication and bed rest.

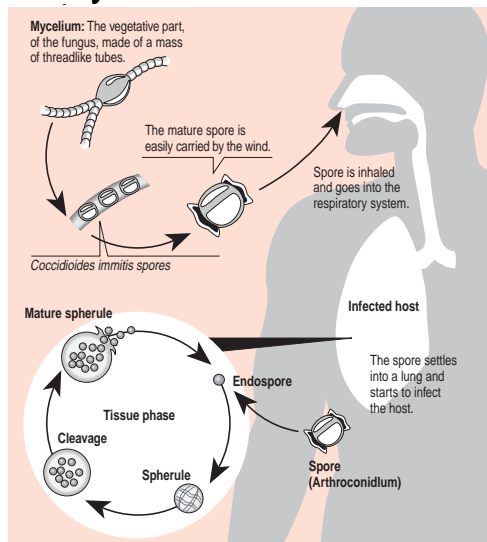
Of all the people infected with Valley Fever, one or more out of 200 will develop the disseminated form, which is devastating, and can be fatal. These are the cases in which the disease spreads beyond the lungs through the bloodstream – typically to the skin, bones and the membranes surrounding the brain, causing meningitis.



Endemic Areas of Valley Fever in North, Central and South America

It is estimated that there are 7,500 new cases of Cocci annually in the U.S.A. alone. This translates to a cost that exceeds \$60 million each year.

Life Cycle of *Coccidioides Immitis*



Source: Kern County Health Department
Courtesy of **KENT KUEHL**/THE BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

WHO GETS IT?

If you live in an endemic area, you may have had Valley Fever without even knowing it. In some endemic areas, as much as half of the population has been infected. Persons whose activities put them in much contact with the soil appear to have a somewhat greater risk. Once infected, persons of African, Filipino and some other Asian ancestries seem to be at a greater risk of contracting the more serious, or disseminated, form of the disease. The young, the old, and those with lowered immune systems are also in the high risk group. While men are at greater risk than women, pregnant women are especially vulnerable, particularly in the third trimester.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We need your support. If you would like additional information or can provide financial assistance, please contact the address below:

Valley Fever Vaccine Project of the Americas

A Rotary District 5240 Project

P.O. Box 2752

Bakersfield, CA 93303

Tel: (661) 832-1456 or

1-800-VAL-FEVR (1-800-825-3387)

Website: www.valleyfever.com

E-mail: info@valleyfever.com