



CDPH Identifies Valley Fever Illness Among Five People Who Attended Kern County Music Festival

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CDPH Identifies Valley Fever Illness Among Attendees of Kern County Music Festival

July 29, 2024

NR24-018

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People who attended “Lightning in a Bottle” music festival should see a healthcare provider if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms

What You Need To Know: CDPH is notifying Californians of Valley fever cases possibly associated with an outdoor music festival near Bakersfield, California. To date, CDPH has identified five patients with Valley fever who attended the festival; three were hospitalized. Valley fever is not contagious, meaning it cannot spread from one person or animal to another. Symptoms include cough, fever, fatigue, difficulty breathing, and chest pain.

Sacramento – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), in partnership with local health departments, is investigating cases of [Valley fever](#) (also called coccidioidomycosis or “cocci”) that occurred among people who traveled through Kern County, California, to attend the outdoor music festival, Lightning in a Bottle. The festival was held May 22-27 at Buena Vista Lake, near the city of Bakersfield. More than 20,000 people from several California counties and possibly from other states and countries attended the festival.

To date, CDPH has identified five patients with Valley fever who attended the festival; three were hospitalized. Additional cases linked to attendance at the outdoor festival are possible.

Valley fever is an infectious disease caused by the *Coccidioides* fungus that grows in the soil and dirt in some areas of California. While most people exposed to this fungus do not develop Valley fever, the fungus can infect the lungs and cause respiratory symptoms, including cough, difficulty breathing, fever, and tiredness or fatigue. In rare cases, the Valley fever fungus can spread to other parts of the body and cause severe disease. Valley fever is not contagious, meaning it cannot spread from one person or animal to another. Past outbreaks of Valley fever have been associated with exposure to dust and dirt at outdoor events and jobsites where dirt was being disturbed in areas of California where Valley fever is common.

Valley fever is on the rise in California, with particularly high numbers of cases reported in 2023 and 2024 and is most common in the San Joaquin Valley and Central Coast areas of California.

What Attendees & Visitors Should Do: CDPH recommends that people who visited Kern County and are experiencing respiratory infection symptoms that have not improved or are lasting longer than a week should visit a healthcare provider and ask about possible Valley fever. Respiratory infection symptoms include cough, fever, fatigue, difficulty breathing, and chest pain. Be sure to mention attendance at the music festival or travel to Kern County where Valley fever is common.

Attendees can also visit the [CDPH Valley fever survey website](#) for more information and to share details about any illness.

What Healthcare Providers Should Do: CDPH requests that healthcare providers evaluating patients with respiratory or other symptoms compatible with Valley fever ask about travel and consider [Valley fever testing](#) in patients who reported attendance at the Lightning in a Bottle music festival or traveled to Kern County in late May.

While the event occurred two months ago and mild cases of Valley fever might have already resolved, other patients with more long-term or severe disease may still be symptomatic or undiagnosed. Healthcare providers based in regions that are [low-incidence or non-endemic for Valley fever](#) may consult the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) or [CDPH](#) websites for guidance and testing recommendations for Valley fever. [Specific laboratory testing](#) for Valley fever is required for accurate diagnosis.

Please note that healthcare providers should also consider asking **all patients** with Valley fever-compatible symptoms about any residence, work, or travel in areas in California where Valley fever is common.

Local and state health departments should notify CDPH of Valley fever cases among attendees of this music festival.

About Valley Fever: For additional information on Valley fever, please visit CDPH's [Valley fever website](#).

Page Last Updated : July 29, 2024