



Valley Fever

Valley fever is caused by breathing in a fungus from dirt and dust in outdoor air, and it can be difficult to avoid breathing in dust. People who live, work, or travel in areas where Valley fever is common can try to avoid spending time outside in dusty areas as much as possible to reduce the risk of breathing in the Valley fever fungus from dust in the air. **There is no vaccine to prevent Valley fever.**

Some practical tips may help prevent Valley fever — these tips can help you avoid breathing in outdoor dust and may help reduce your risk of getting Valley fever:

- Avoid dust outside in places where Valley fever is common (**where Valley fever rates are high**).
- Stay inside and keep windows and doors closed when it's windy outside and the air is dusty, especially during dust storms.
- While driving in areas where Valley fever is common, keep car windows closed and use recirculating air, if available.
- Consider avoiding outdoor activities that involve close contact with dirt or dust, including yard work and digging, especially if you are in one of the **groups at higher risk for severe or disseminated Valley fever**.
- Cover open dirt areas around your home with grass, plants, or other ground cover (like gravel or wood chips) to help reduce dusty, open areas.
- Try to avoid dusty areas outside, like construction or excavation sites. If you cannot avoid these dusty areas, or if you must be outdoors in dusty air, consider wearing an **N95 respirator (a type of face mask) certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)** to help protect against dust that can cause Valley fever.

Cloth masks, KN95s (not certified by NIOSH), bandanas, surgical face masks, and simple dust masks (with only one strap) are not as protective against dust as N95 masks.

- N95 respirators are available at drugstores, hardware supply stores, and are also available to buy online.



On windy and dusty days, stay inside and keep windows and doors closed.



When driving through a dusty area, keep car windows closed and use recirculating air.



Control dust in your yard by covering open dirt areas around your house with grass, plants, or other ground cover (like gravel).

- To be effective, N95 respirators must be fitted properly. Instructions can be found in the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention instruction video for using disposable respirators](#).

When digging or stirring up dust in areas where Valley fever is common — you can help protect yourself from breathing in dust that may cause Valley fever:

- Wet down soil before digging or disturbing dirt to reduce dust.
- Stay upwind of the area where dirt is being disturbed.
- Consider wearing an N95 mask or respirator (cloth face masks, bandanas, surgical face masks, KN95 masks, and simple dust masks are not as protective).
- After returning indoors, change out of clothes if covered with dirt. Be careful not to shake out clothing and breathe in the dust before washing. If someone else is washing your clothes, warn the person before they handle the clothes.



Before digging, wet down dirt to reduce dust.



While digging, face away from the direction that the wind is blowing.



Consider wearing an N95 mask if you must be around outdoor dust. Cloth masks and medical masks do not provide the same level of protection against dust as N95 masks.