

Valley fever hospitalizations increase in Calif.

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A new study published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows the annual rate of hospitalizations for valley fever, a potentially lethal but often misdiagnosed disease, has doubled over the past 12 years in California.

According to the study published Wednesday, the fever—which can be contracted by simply breathing [fungus spores](#) found in soil—has cost more than \$2 billion in [hospital charges](#).

While in most cases the fever results in no symptoms or causes mild to severe flu-like symptoms, in some cases the infection can spread to the brain, bones, skin, even eyes, leading to blindness, skin abscesses, lung failure, even death.

In California, according to the CDC, valley fever cases rose from about 700 in 1998 to more than 5,500 cases reported in 2011.

The fever is prevalent in arid regions of the U.S., especially California and Arizona.

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