

Nevertheless, reducing dust is a reasonable risk-reduction strategy for addressing occupational coccidioidomycosis.

On the basis of our findings, we recommended that prison management weigh the advantages and disadvantages of various environmental mitigation efforts to reduce dust exposures. Our recommendations included providing employees with education and training about coccidioidomycosis symptoms and transmission, risk factors for disseminated disease, and ways to minimize exposures; closing the prison yards during dust storms; and using respirators approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health as part of a respiratory protection program for employees who must work outside during unusually dusty days or who may disturb soil. The recently available coccidioidal spherulin skin test may also be a potentially useful tool for identifying at-risk employees.

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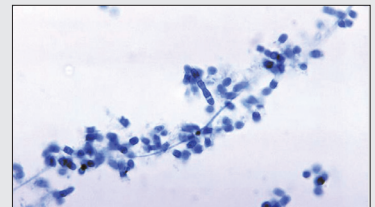
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Coccidioides [kok-sid"e-oi'dēs]

A soil fungus found in the western United States and parts of Mexico and Central and South America, *Coccidioides* was discovered in 1892 by Alejandro Posadas, a medical student, in an Argentinian soldier with widespread disease. Biopsy specimens revealed organisms that resembled the protozoan *Coccidia* (from the Greek *kokkis*, “little berry”). In 1896, Gilchrist and Rixford named the organism *Coccidioides* (“resembling *Coccidia*”) *immitis* (Latin for “harsh,” describing the clinical course). Ophüls and Moffitt proved that *C. immitis* was a fungus rather than a protozoan in 1900. In 2002, *C. immitis* was divided into a second species, *C. posadasii*, after Alejandro Posadas.

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Photomicrograph reveals the presence of thick-walled arthroconidia and arthrospores of *Coccidioides immitis* fungal organisms.

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