



Camp News

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Drinking Water for Campers

One of the exciting things about camping is being near beautiful lakes, streams, and rivers. Although the water may look pure, it can still be contaminated. The water may look and smell fine, but may still contain harmful viruses, parasites, bacteria, and other contaminants. Campers and hikers who drink untreated water directly from lakes and streams are at increased risk of becoming ill with *Giardia*, *Shigella*, *Cryptosporidium*, and other waterborne diseases. Children, pregnant women, and people with weak or compromised immune systems are most at risk from waterborne illnesses. To learn how to protect yourself against these diseases, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) webpage [Drinking Water - Camping, Hiking, Travel](#). There are a number of helpful links on water disinfection for travelers, water filters, water treatment methods, and emergency disinfection of drinking water.



Coccidioidomycosis (Valley Fever)

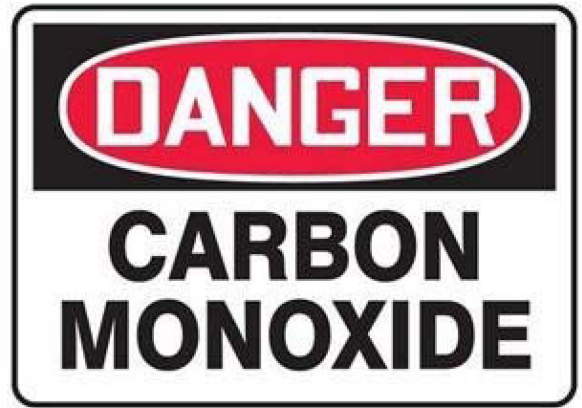
Did you know the disease coccidioidomycosis is endemic (native and common) in the southwestern United States, including southern California. Coccidioidomycosis, also known as Valley Fever, is a lung disease that results from infection with *Coccidioides*, a fungus which lives in dirt. Symptoms include fever, cough, headache, rash, muscle aches, or joint pain. In severe cases, patients develop pneumonia or meningitis, sometimes resulting in death. Anyone can get sick with Valley Fever. People become infected with this disease by inhaling fungal spores which become airborne when dust is stirred up. People exposed to the dust breathe in the microscopic spores without even realizing it. Valley Fever is difficult to prevent, but try to limit your exposure to dusty areas, if at all possible. To learn more about this disease, [click here](#) to read our fact sheet.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning: A Hidden Hazard of Camping

Carbon monoxide is a simple molecule of carbon and oxygen that is deadly to humans and animals that breathe it in. Carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless, and can only be detected with special equipment, or a carbon monoxide monitor. Recognizing the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning is important. Because the symptoms are flu-like or food poisoning-like initially, diagnosis and self-rescue can be difficult unless carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected. Headache, nausea, vomiting, weakness, and collapse are followed quickly by coma and death. Some first aid books mention carbon monoxide poisoning victims as having cherry red coloration to their skin; however, this is not a reliable sign of carbon monoxide poisoning. The best thing to do is know the signs, symptoms, and the situations where carbon monoxide is produced.

Prevention of carbon monoxide poisoning includes not using open flame stoves, portable heaters, or lanterns while sleeping in enclosed areas. Sleeping in enclosed areas, such as tents, campers, boats and other vehicles, can cause dangerous levels of carbon monoxide to build up. Campers should use alternative heat sources to fuel-burning appliances inside enclosed shelters, such as adequate bedding clothing, and consuming extra calories with plenty of fluids during the outing to prevent hypothermia (a dangerous loss of body warmth that can cause death).

To learn more information about carbon monoxide poisoning, read the [Carbon monoxide poisoning: Prevention guidelines](#).



Camping Health and Safety Tips

As the summer approaches, families will begin to make camping plans. Camping is a great time to be outdoors and enjoy the natural wildlife. Before you pack your tents, visit the CDC's very helpful webpage: [Camping health and safety tips](#). There is information on avoiding ticks and mosquitos (which can transmit a variety of diseases), preventing water-related illnesses and injuries, avoiding wild animals that may carry rabies, Hantavirus or other diseases, following food safety practices, and more. Be sure to also read the [Packing Checklist](#) for campers to help you prepare for a safe camping trip.

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If you have any questions or comments, please contact Scott Stanley, Health Education Specialist II at 800-442-2283 or Scott.Stanley@dph.sbcounty.gov.

We appreciate the effort you make to protect the public's health in our County.