



ARIZONA HUMANE SOCIETY

Improving the Lives of Animals Since 1957

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VALLEY FEVER CASES ON THE RISE. ARE VALLEY PETS SAFE?

AHS Urges Pet Owners to Recognize the Signs and Symptoms of Valley Fever in Pets

(PHOENIX) – As signs of Valley Fever increase throughout the state, the Arizona Humane Society is urging pet owners to be aware of



6-year-old Max, an AHS alum, has been recovering from Valley Fever for the last 5 years.

the signs and symptoms associated with Valley Fever in their pets. While the monsoon season was much ado about nothing, the desert dust storms, a.k.a. haboobs that swept through the Valley this year were quite another story. Couple those extreme dust storms with Valley Fever, a fungus that produces spores which are then spread through the dust and air, and not only are people susceptible, but so too are some of our most constant companions, our dogs.

KNOW THE SIGNS

Symptoms of Valley Fever in pets typically appear three weeks after infection, but may even take months to materialize. Early symptoms often include upper respiratory ailments such as a dry, harsh cough as well as a fever and lack of appetite. However, Valley Fever can also spread to the bones

and joints causing lameness, lethargy and weight loss. In the most severe cases, the fungal infection may reach the brain resulting in seizures.

SEEK TREATMENT

Diagnosed through blood tests, Valley Fever is a disease often treated through anti-fungal medications and is a very lengthy – often lasting 6-12 months - and expensive disease to treat. Throughout treatment, multiple follow-up blood tests are required to determine when treatment can cease. In the event that the disease does spread to the brain or spine, lifelong medication and treatment are required.

ABOUT VALLEY FEVER IN PETS

My dog is vaccinated. Can he/she still get Valley Fever? Unfortunately there is no vaccination against Valley Fever, however most canine immune systems are able to fend off Valley Fever without severe reactions occurring. Those at higher risk for the diseases are very young puppies, older dogs, or dogs with weakened immune systems.

Can cats get Valley Fever? Yes, felines can get Valley Fever, however the disease is much more prevalent in dogs. The Valley Fever Center for Excellence at the University of Arizona estimates that there is 1 cat case for every 50 dog cases.

Can Valley Fever spread from pet to person or pet to pet? Typically, Valley Fever is not contagious to other pets or family members, and is only contagious in the very rare, uncommon cutaneous form involving skin lesions.

Can pets survive Valley Fever? Yes, with the appropriate treatment and medication pets can survive Valley Fever and go on to live happy, healthy lives.