

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release  
Contact: Melissa Propp, Public Health Nurse 308-345-4223

### Be Aware of Tick-borne Diseases

With spring's arrival, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to encourage everyone to take precautions against tick-borne diseases. There are some potentially serious diseases carried by ticks in southwest Nebraska.

<b>Common Tick-borne Diseases Found in Nebraska</b>			
<b>Disease</b>	<b>Tick</b>	<b>Distribution</b>	<b>Signs &amp; Symptoms</b>
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	<i>Dermacentor variabilis</i> (American dog tick or wood tick)	Statewide including southwest Nebraska	<i>Fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea &amp; vomiting, lack of appetite, and rash (usually a late sign)</i>
Tularemia	<i>Dermacentor variabilis</i> (American dog tick or wood tick)	Statewide including southwest Nebraska	<i>Fever, headache, skin ulcers at the site of the bite, swollen glands (usually in the armpit or groin)</i>
Ehrlichiosis	<i>Amblyomma americanum</i> (Lone star tick)	Southern and central Nebraska	<i>Fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea &amp; vomiting, confusion, rash (more common in children)</i>

“These diseases are transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected tick,” shares Melissa Propp, SWNPHD Public Health Nurse. “They can be severe or even fatal if not treated in the first few days of symptoms. See your doctor immediately if you have been bitten by a tick and experience sudden onset of high fever, deep muscle pain, severe headache or chills.”

Lyme Disease is not commonly found in Nebraska. Deer ticks or black-legged ticks are not yet established in Nebraska, meaning any cases of confirmed Lyme disease have been related to travel outside the state.

It is a good idea to take preventive measures against ticks year-round, but especially in warmer months when ticks are most active. Some suggestions include:

- Use repellents that contain 20-30% DEET on exposed skin and clothing for protection that lasts up to several hours. Always check the label for proper use instructions.
- Parents should apply DEET products to their children, avoiding hands, eyes and mouth.

- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing, gear, and tents.
- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Mow lawns regularly, remove leaf litter/brush and prune low-lying bushes to let in more sunlight. Keep woodpiles in sunny areas off the ground.

“If you are in areas with the potential for ticks, we recommend that you bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors,” explains Propp. “It will be easier to find and wash off ticks that are crawling instead of attached.”

For more information on tick-borne diseases, contact SWNPHD by calling 308-345- 4223 or email: [nurse@swhealth.ne.gov](mailto:nurse@swhealth.ne.gov). SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street, McCook – one block north of Arby’s. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

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