

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Ticks Can Make You Sick

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department has received reports of ticks being found active in the health district and would like to encourage everyone to take precautions against tick-borne diseases. There are some potentially serious diseases carried by ticks in southwest Nebraska.

Common Tick-borne Diseases Found in Nebraska

Disease	Tick Species	Regions	Symptoms
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	American Dog Tick <i>Dermacentor variabilis</i>	Statewide	Fever, headaches, muscle aches, nausea & vomiting, loss of appetite, and rash
Tularemia	American Dog Tick <i>Dermacentor variabilis</i>	Statewide	Fever, headache, swollen glands in the armpit or groin, and skin ulcers at the site of the bite
Ehrlichiosis	Lone Star Tick <i>Amblyomma americanum</i>	Southern and central Nebraska	Fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea & vomiting, confusion, rash (more common in children)

“These diseases are transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected tick,” shares Melissa Propp, SWNPHD Clinic Manager. “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 rash.”

Lyme Disease is not commonly found in Nebraska. Deer ticks or black-legged ticks have been found in some eastern counties in Nebraska; however, most cases of confirmed Lyme disease have still been related to travel outside the state. Only one case of Lyme Disease has been confirmed to be from a tick in Nebraska.

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.
- Check for ticks after coming in from outside, especially from wooded areas or areas with long grass/weeds.
- Wash clothes right away and put into a dryer on the hottest setting to kill any hidden ticks that remain.
- 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. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street, McCook – one block north of Arby’s. You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram or visit swhealth.ne.gov. SWNPHD covers Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, Furnas, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties.

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