

HEALTH BULLETIN

February 2013

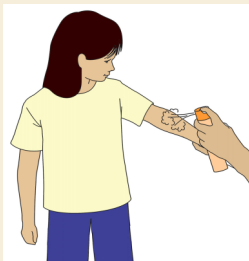
ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER

Since 2002, there have been over 200 cases and 18 deaths of Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF) on tribal lands. RMSF is a potentially serious bacterial infection transmitted to humans by tick bites. RMSF occurs when an infected tick attaches to your skin and feeds on your blood. The infection has the potential to spread to your bloodstream and other areas of your body.

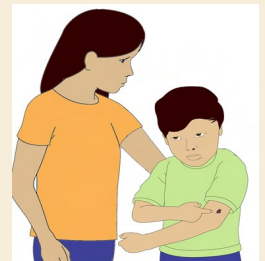
RMSF does not spread directly from person to person. If treated promptly, a case of RMSF is usually fairly mild, but if left untreated can result in severe illness, permanent disability, or death. Because RMSF can progress rapidly, prompt treatment is important. Protect your family from RMSF by treating your dogs for ticks and looking for ticks on yourself and your family daily.

If you or your child have a fever that lasts more than 2 days or a rash - AND - have been outside or have had contact with dogs, call your health care provider, even if you do not remember being bitten by a tick!

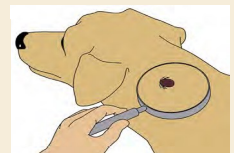
Protect Yourself and Your Family From Ticks By:



- ✓ Using insect repellent on clothes and skin
- ✓ Doing frequent checks for crawling and biting ticks on yourself and your children each day
- ✓ Doing a full-body exam each day
- ✓ Removing attached ticks and flushing them down the toilet
- ✓ Wearing light colored clothing so you can see ticks easily and tucking your clothes in to keep ticks away from your skin



- ### Treat Dogs By:
- ✓ Using tick collars containing propoxur or amitraz, spot on treatments, sprays, or dips
 - ✓ Checking dogs for crawling and biting ticks and removing them
 - ✓ Contact your animal control, Community Health Representative (CHR), Health Department, or vet to learn what products are available in your area



Keep Ticks Away From Your Home By:

- ✓ Using a pest control service or a do-it-yourself pesticide application
- ✓ Removing furniture, mattresses, couches, or couch cushions from your yard and under your house
- ✓ Removing brush, weeds, and leaf litter from your yard
- ✓ Keeping wood piles away from your house



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- **What is Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever?**

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) is a severe disease caused by a bacterial organism called *Rickettsia rickettsii*, which is carried by ticks. There are usually a few thousand cases of this disease each year in the United States. This disease can cause long term health problems and can be fatal.

- **How Does Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever Spread?**

Dogs and people can get RMSF if they are bitten by a tick that is carrying the bacterium. If you are removing a tick and accidentally crush its head, the crushed parts can also pass the bacterium to you in scrapes or cut skin. Casual contact like petting a dog or hugging a person with the disease cannot give you the disease.

- **What are the Symptoms of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever?**

This is a very serious and possibly life-threatening disease. People generally start having fever and feeling nauseous about 5-10 days after being bitten by an infected tick. Vomiting, severe headache, muscle pain and loss of appetite are common. A rash may develop after a couple of days of fever, and can appear on wrists, forearms, and ankles, spreading to the trunk, palms and soles of the feet. Patients often need to be hospitalized and about 4% of people with RMSF die from the disease.

- **What is the Treatment for Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever?**

A provider can give you antibiotics, doxycycline, to treat this disease and early treatment is critical. Doxycycline is the only treatment for RMSF. Most long term health problems happen in people whose treatment was delayed.

REMOVING TICKS

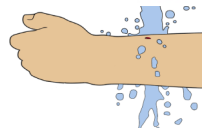
Use tweezers and protect bare hands with tissue or gloves, if available. Follow these steps for safe tick removal:



Grab tick close to the skin.



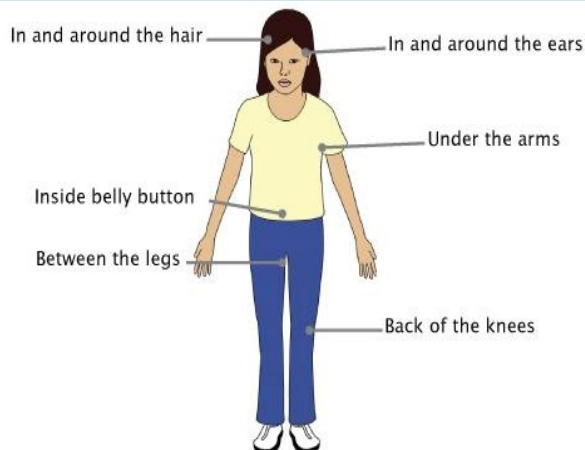
Gently pull straight up until all parts of the tick are removed. Flush the tick down the toilet.



Wash the bite with soap and water.

DO NOT use petroleum jelly, fingernail polish, a lit match, or rubbing alcohol to remove ticks. You might make the tick release more fluids back into the bite wound and that can increase your chance of infection.

Check These Parts of your Child's Body for Ticks:



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Arizona Department of Health Services: http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oids/vector/rmsf/rocky_mountain.htm
Nevada State Health Division: <http://health.nv.gov/index.htm>
Utah Department of Health: <http://health.utah.gov/>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rmsf/>



Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. • Tribal Epidemiology Center
2214 N. Central Avenue • Phoenix, Arizona 85004
Telephone: (602) 258-4822 • Fax: (602) 258-4825
Email: TECinfo@itcaonline.com • Website: www.itcaonline.com/epi

