

facts about

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) is caused by a bacteria spread by ticks. North Carolina often reports the highest number of people with RMSF in the United States. RMSF is most common from spring through fall when ticks are more active and people are outside more.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of RMSF start from 2 days to 2 weeks after a tick bite. Early symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea/stomach pain or not feeling hungry
- Muscle pain
- Rash (most people get a rash several days after the fever begins)

TREATMENT

RMSF is treated with antibiotics. Your doctor will treat you based on your symptoms and whether you may have been bitten by a tick. Your doctor may test you for RMSF, but should treat you anyway, even before the test results come in. If treatment is not started right away, RMSF can lead to serious problems or even death.

HOW IT SPREADS

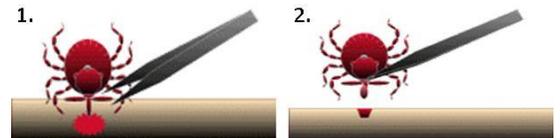
Ticks feed by attaching to the skin. They become infected by feeding on animals that have RMSF. Ticks spread the infection when they attach to other animals or people to feed. RMSF does not spread from person to person.

WHAT TO DO IF A TICK BITES YOU

- Take ticks off right away (see below)
- Note of the date of the bite on your calendar
- Go to a health care provider if you start to have symptoms within the next month

HOW TO REMOVE A TICK

1. Use tweezers to firmly grab the tick
2. Pull up slowly and steadily
3. Disinfect the skin and tweezers and wash hands



Never squeeze or crush a tick. Doing so might spread illness.

Do NOT use Vaseline, hot matches, nail polish or other things to remove ticks. These do NOT work.

HOW TO PREVENT ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER—READ THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PAGE

how to prevent

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Take ticks off right away! This is the most important thing you can do to keep from getting RMSF and the other illnesses ticks spread (see other side).

Check yourself, your children and pets for ticks after being outside. Take a bath within two hours of coming inside. Ticks that aren't fully attached will wash off. The shower is a good place to check for ticks. Pay special attention to your hair, behind your ears, your neck, under your arms, your waist, between your legs (groin), behind your knees and any place your skin folds.

Ticks like to live in long grasses, underbrush, deep woods and leaf litter. To keep from getting tick bites:

- Use insect repellents that contain DEET on skin (see below) and permethrin on clothing (follow product directions).
- Wear light colored clothing so you can see ticks.
- Wear long pants and shirts with long sleeves when in areas of high grass, brush, leaf litter and woods. Tuck pants into socks. Tuck shirts into pants.
- Treat pets that spend time outdoors for ticks. Use tick repellants especially made for pets. Follow product directions.
- Keep grass mowed short. Remove leaf litter, brush and tall weeds from around your home and at the edge of the lawn. Create a tick free area by mulching, putting in gravel or pavement (3 feet wide) or fencing between landscaped and natural areas.

HOW TO USE DEET PRODUCTS SAFELY

Insect repellents that contain DEET work best to prevent tick bites. The amount of DEET in insect repellents ranges from 10% to over 30%. The higher the amount of DEET in a repellent, the longer it works. The chances of harmful effects from DEET insect repellents are low if used safely.

To use DEET safely:

- Don't use on children under 2 months of age.
- Don't use repellents that contain more than 30% DEET on children.
- Adults should put insect repellents on children.
- To put insect repellents on the face, spray on hands first. Wipe the repellent from hands on to the face. Avoid the eyes, nose, mouth or ears.
- Use repellents only on exposed skin or on clothing (not under clothes).
- Do not use repellents on cuts, wounds or irritated skin.
- Do not put spray repellents on inside or near food.
- Don't use sunscreens that have DEET in them. Put a sunscreen on first then put the repellent on top (if both are needed).
- Wash repellents off when they are no longer needed.

Stop using an insect repellent if you think you or your child is having a reaction to it. Wash the treated skin, and call the Poison Control Center (1-800-848-6946). Take the repellent with you if you go to the doctor.