



**Public Health**  
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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact:** Michael Flanagan, Sanitarian,  
Environmental Health, (217) 531-2908  
Lori A. Holmes, Public Relations,  
(217) 531-2927

## **Case of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever Verified in Local Champaign County Dog**

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Encourages Citizens to be  
Knowledgeable of Tick Precautions and Tick-borne Diseases*

Champaign, IL – A case of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) has been positively identified in a local dog in Champaign County. To date, no human cases of RMSF have been reported. The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) encourages citizens of Champaign County to be vigilant in checking both themselves and their pets for ticks, take basic precautions to prevent exposure to ticks and to recognize the potential symptoms of tick-borne diseases.

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) is a disease caused by a bacteria carried by ticks. Symptoms of RMSF in people include fever, nausea and muscle pain about a week after being bitten by a tick, followed a few days later by a prominent rash, usually located on the arms or ankles. RMSF cannot be spread by animals or people only through a tick bite or from exposure to tick body parts or fluids which might enter the body through cuts or scrapes on the skin.

There are many basic steps that can be taken to prevent tick bites, and the possible exposure to tick-borne diseases including Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme Disease, tularemia, ehrlichiosis, and many others. Steps include:

- Avoid tick infested areas. Ticks are often found in areas with tall grass and weeds or wooded areas. If walking in these areas, try to walk in the center of trails so vegetation does not brush against you or your pet.
- Wear light colored clothing, which allows you to see ticks crawling on your clothing.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, socks and shoes. Tuck your pant legs into your socks to prevent ticks from having easy access to exposed areas and crawling

- onto skin.
- Apply repellents to discourage tick attachment. Always follow label instructions.
  - Perform tick checks every two or three hours using a hand held or full length mirror. Pay special attention to:
    - Under the arms
    - In and around the ears
    - Back of the knees
    - Feet & ankles
    - In & around the hair
    - Around the waist
    - Inside the belly button
  - If pets are outdoors, check them for ticks before bringing them in the house. Contact your veterinarian for additional options for tick control for pets.
  - Reduce exposure to ticks by reducing areas of tall dense vegetation around the house.

If a tick is discovered, it is important to remove it properly. The proper removal of ticks includes:

- Do not use bare hands to remove a tick. Use a barrier such as tweezers or tissue to grasp the tick near the mouth parts (as close to the skin as possible).
- Gently pull the tick in a steady upward motion.
- Wash the area with soap and water and use a disinfectant on the bite site.
- Record the date and location of the tick bite, and watch for early symptoms of tick borne illness including fever, nausea and muscle aches.

**NOTE:** If an unexplained illness with a fever develops after having any exposure to a tick. Contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

***DO NOT:***

- Squeeze the tick.
- Pour kerosene, nail polish, soap or rubbing alcohol on the tick.
- Rub Vaseline on the tick.
- Attempt to burn the tick with a match or cigarette butt.

Once a tick is removed it should be placed in a hard leak proof plastic container with rubbing alcohol to be identified by a tick expert. FREE tick identification is available at CUPHD at 201 West Kenyon Road in Champaign; Monday through Friday, 8:00am – 4:00pm.

Although ticks and the prospect of contracting a tick-borne illness is a concern, there is no need to avoid the woods or the outdoors. People and pets can still enjoy a healthy summer complete with all their favorite outdoor pastimes as long as proper and easy preventative measures are taken.

For additional information on ticks, tick-borne diseases or free tick identification for Champaign County residents, please contact CUPHD at (217) 352-7961 or visit CUPHD on the web at [www.cuphd.org](http://www.cuphd.org).

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