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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Champaign County Confirms Case of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Advises Residents to Stay Vigilant in Their Efforts to Combat the Spread of Tick-Borne Illnesses

CHAMPAIGN, IL – The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) has confirmed a recent case of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) in an individual in Champaign County.

RMSF is a tickborne illness transmitted in Illinois primarily by the American dog tick and is caused by the bacterium *Rickettsia rickettsii*. The disease can be fatal if not promptly and properly treated, even among individuals previously considered healthy. Symptom onset is one to four days and includes high fever, severe headache, muscle soreness, gastrointestinal distress, and swelling around the eyes and back of hands. Additionally, a distinct rash may emerge several days after onset, typically appearing as small, flat, pink spots initially located on the wrists, forearms, and ankles, which can extend to the trunk and occasionally manifest on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. It is important to note that some individuals may not present with the rash at all, or the rash may have an atypical appearance. RMSF is not transmitted person-to-person.

Ticks inhabit grassy, brushy, or wooded environments, and may also be found on animals. Engaging in outdoor activities such as walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting can potentially expose you to ticks. It is common for individuals to encounter ticks in their own yard or local neighborhood.

Individuals can protect themselves against tick bites by following these tips:

- Talk to a veterinarian about tickborne diseases and prevention products for pets and livestock. Check pets for ticks after coming indoors.

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- Use an [Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent](#) containing DEET (20-30 percent), picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone, making sure to follow product instructions.
- Apply products containing 0.5 percent permethrin to clothing and equipment. Permethrin can effectively treat boots, clothing, and camping gear, maintaining its protective properties through multiple wash cycles. Alternatively, consider purchasing clothing and gear already treated with permethrin.
- Do a body check after returning from the outdoors. Use either a hand-held or full-length mirror to inspect all parts of their body. Once indoors, tick-infested clothing should be placed in a dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes to eradicate ticks from dry garments.
- Shower within two hours of coming indoors. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks and is a good time to do a tick check.

Information on how to remove a tick can be found on the CDC's [tick removal page](#).

Individuals who become ill with a fever and/or rash after spending time in areas inhabited by ticks should contact their health care provider immediately.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has collaborated with the Illinois Natural History Survey to develop an [interactive tick surveillance map](#). This map documents the counties in Illinois where various tick species have been confirmed, along with the diseases they may carry. Additionally, IDPH has issued a [press release](#) urging the public to educate themselves on tick protection measures and to actively engage in efforts to "Fight the Bite" this season.

For more information on RMSF, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/rmsf/index.html>. Additional information on avoiding ticks can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/index.html>.

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