

CDRS

Communicable Disease Reporting System

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER

Rocky Mountain spotted fever is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Rickettsia rickettsii*, which is carried by ticks.

Symptoms

- Initial symptoms include fever that may be accompanied by headache, malaise, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting, or lack of appetite.
- Most people develop a rash on their palms and the soles of their feet. The rash first appears 2-5 days after the start of the fever. It often begins as small, flat, pink, non-itchy spots on the wrists, forearms, and ankles.
- Later symptoms include rash, abdominal pain, joint pain, and diarrhea. The characteristic red, spotted rash is usually seen on or after the 6th day after the first symptoms begin. Not all people develop the rash.

Transmission

- Rocky Mountain spotted fever is transmitted to humans from the bite of a tick. In Ohio, the American dog tick is most often the culprit. The peak season for these ticks is in May and June.
- Humans cannot infect other humans.

Treatment

- A course of antibiotics are given to treat Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Prevention

- Avoid areas where ticks might be present: tall grass, high brush, weedy or woody areas.
- When entering tick-prone areas, take the following precautions:
 - Wear light colored, long pants. Tuck pant cuffs into sock tops and spray pant legs and socks with insect repellent, following directions carefully.
 - Conduct visual "tick checks" on yourself and children every hour or two.
 - Check pets for ticks before allowing them into the home if they enter tick-prone areas
 - Carefully remove attached ticks as soon as possible
 - Keep yard and play areas well mowed to discourage ticks

Additional Information

To remove an attached tick, grasp it with tweezers as close as possible to the skin and pull with firm, steady pressure straight out. Do not twist or jerk the tick, as the mouthparts may break off. If tweezers are not available, protect fingers with rubber gloves or tissue paper.

- Do not handle ticks with bare hands.
- Do not squeeze, crush or puncture the body of the tick as it may contain infected fluids.
- After the tick is removed, thoroughly disinfect the bite site and wash hands.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Franklin County



Board of Health

Report Disease With Ease - 24 hours a day

www.cdrsinfo.com

Columbus and Franklin County Communicable Disease Reporting System

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