

## What is Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF)?

- Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever is a disease caused by the bacteria (germ) *Rickettsia, rickettsii*.

## How is RMSF spread?

- RMSF is usually spread through the bite of an infected brown dog tick by the bacteria (*Rickettsia*).
- Because ticks on dogs can be infected with *rickettsii*, dog and people can get RMSF from the same ticks.
- Dogs that roam free can become “tick buses” that spread infected ticks all over the community.

## Can Animals get RMSF?

- Yes. Dogs can develop RMSF just like humans. Cat, Horses and species do not get RMSF.
- Dogs get the diseases because the most common ticks vector on Arizona is the “Brown Dog Tick” and this tick prefers to live and feed on Dogs.

## Can animals transmit RMSF to me?

- Yes, but not directly. People get this disease when they are bitten by a tick that is carrying the bacterium *R. Rickettsia*. Because ticks on dogs can be infected with *R. rickettsii*, dogs and people can get RMSF from the same ticks. These ticks can also bite other animals and pass RMSF to them.

## What are the symptoms of RMSF?

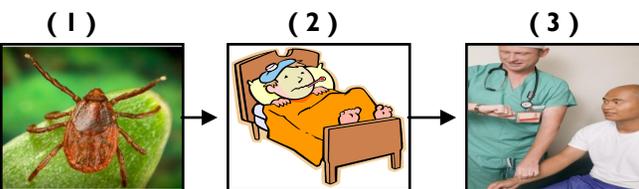
- The first symptoms of disease occur 2—14 days after the tick bite.
- Symptoms begin with sudden fever, severe headache, may also include deep muscle pain, nausea and vomiting.
- Many people develop a rash on their arms and legs about 3 to 5 days after the fever starts.

## Is there treatment for RMSF?

- RMSF can be treated with a common antibiotic called doxycycline.
- Serious complications, including death, can occur if the disease is not recognized and treated early.

## Biology of RMSF—Timeline

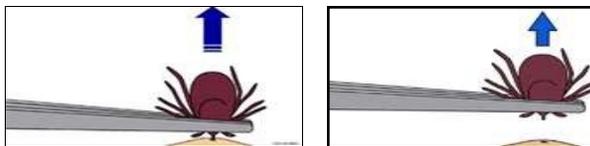
- First there is a tick bite.
- First symptoms of disease occur 2-14 days after the tick bite.
- Most people with RMSF in AZ go to the Doctor in the first 2 days of symptoms.



## Tick Removal

Because ticks do not transmit disease until they have been attached to the host for several hours to several days, it is very important to remove ticks as soon as they are found. The following is the best way to remove a tick.

Grasp it with tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Avoid any twisting or jerking motion that may break off the mouth parts in the skin. Mouth parts left in the wound will not transmit the disease, but may cause a minor irritation or infection, similar to a reaction to a splinter.



If tweezers are not available, protect your fingers with gloves, tissue, or a paper towel. Do not touch the tick with bare fingers. The disease causing organism can enter the body through a break in the skin on your fingers and cause disease.

After the tick has been removed, wash hands with soap and water.

Dispose of the tick by drowning it in rubbing alcohol or flushing it down a drain or toilet.

Tick removal using nail polish, petroleum jelly, alcohol or a hot match is not safe.

If you get sick, and you have been exposed to ticks, be sure to tell your Doctor about your tick exposure.

## For more information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/>

Navajo Division of Health  
Health Education Program  
928-871-6562

# Home Risk Assessment

## Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever



**Home Risk Assessment  
Tick Habitat and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever Prevention**

**Determine if your family and home are at risk for ticks to establish in and around home:**

|    |                                                                                                                                      |   |   |     |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|-----|
| 1  | Have ticks been seen around the outside of the home?                                                                                 | Y | N | N/A |
| 2  | Have ticks been seen inside the home?                                                                                                | Y | N | N/A |
| 3  | Have ticks been seen on dog(s)?                                                                                                      | Y | N | N/A |
| 4  | Have ticks been seen where the dog sleeps?                                                                                           | Y | N | N/A |
| 5  | Does the dog(s) have a tick collar?                                                                                                  | Y | N | N/A |
| 6  | Are pets allowed in the house?                                                                                                       | Y | N | N/A |
| 7  | Has anyone in the family or visitors had a tick bite recently?                                                                       | Y | N | N/A |
| 8  | Has there been any illness in the Family or visitor resulting in a fever or rash?                                                    | Y | N | N/A |
| 9  | Was pesticide applied to the outside of home?<br>If yes, what type of pesticide is being used?<br>How often is pesticide applied?    | Y | N | N/A |
| 10 | Was pesticide applied to the inside of the home?<br>If yes, what type of pesticide is being used?<br>How often is pesticide applied? | Y | N | N/A |
| 11 | Are dog(s) treated with a tick medicine?<br>If yes, what type?                                                                       | Y | N | N/A |
| 12 | Was a Doctor seen as a result of illness or a tick bite?                                                                             | Y | N | N/A |

**Check if your home has the following risk - Please take action to protect yourself:**

- |                                                                    |                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Routine presence of stray dog(s) outdoors | <input type="checkbox"/> Mattress of upholstered furniture kept outside |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pets kept inside                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Firewood or other items stored near the house  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yard not fenced                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Materials stored directly on the ground        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog house located next to the house       | <input type="checkbox"/> Untrimmed tree in the yard                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trash / debris around the house           | <input type="checkbox"/> Inoperative vehicle near the house             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area under house is open to dog(s)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Water leak or standing water near the house    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area under porch is open to dog(s)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Over grown weeds around the house              |

**(Follow recommendation to protect your family vs. ticks)**

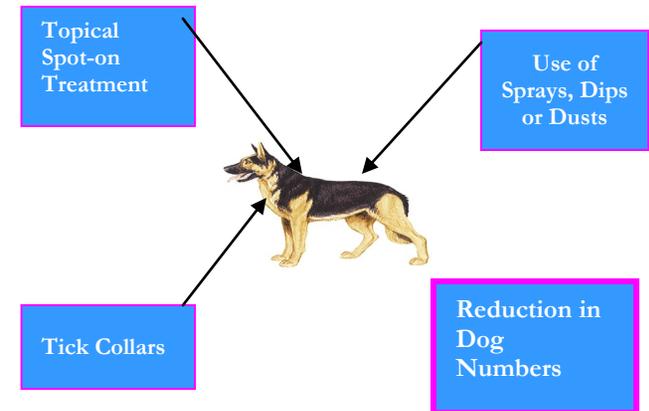
- Fence in your pets while fencing out stray dogs.
- Treat with tick products, flea collars for dogs "Read the Label"
- Inspect crack & crevices for ticks
- Move dog house a distance from home
- Remove debris where tick may hide
- Remove or trim over grown vegetation near house
- Eliminate moisture / water leak around the house

Other concerns or recommendations: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Prevention**

Ticks do not jump or fly onto people or animals. They wait on low vegetation, attaching to hosts as they pass by and crawl upward. The following steps can protect you against ticks and diseases they carry:

- Ticks find their hosts by detecting the breath and body odors of animals, or by sensing body heat, moisture and vibrations.
- Avoid tick-infested areas such as tall grass and vegetation.
- Keep grass and over grown weeds cut in yards. Ticks wait for a host, resting on the tips of grasses and shrubs. Follow directions carefully if chemicals are used for ticks or hire a professional.
- Conduct tick checks on yourself, your children and your pets every day.
- Apply tick repellent to areas of the body and clothing that may come in contact with grass and brush. Repellents include those containing up to 50% DEET for adults or less than 30% for children. Follow directions carefully and do not overuse. Some tick repellents can cause toxic or allergic reactions.



**Navajo Housing Authority**

**Pest Control Program  
Phone: Fort Def. 928-729-6359**

**Navajo Veterinary & Livestock Program  
928-871-6615**