



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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OUTDOOR ACTIVITY ENTHUSIASTS URGED TO BE AWARE OF TICKS

Ticks May Carry Lyme Disease, Tularemia; County Urges Caution While Hiking

As summer approaches, county residents are preparing to enjoy outdoor activities in local parks and open spaces, and the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) and Department of Environmental Health (DEH) Vector Control warn against exposure to ticks.

"Ticks can carry Lyme disease, tularemia, or other diseases," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., Interim County of San Diego Public Health Officer. "These diseases can affect a person's health for months or years."

"Vector Control regularly tests ticks for tularemia and Lyme disease," said Gary Erbeck, Director, DEH. "We recommend using insect repellent to prevent ticks and other insects from biting. Flea and tick control products should also be used on pets."

Ticks get tularemia by biting infected rodents, rabbits and other animals. Symptoms in humans include lymph node swelling, headache, and fever. Other symptoms include a skin ulcer at the site of the bite, fatigue, body aches, and nausea. It is not transmitted from person to person. It can cause death in rare cases. Tularemia also can be transmitted by handling or eating infected meat, or drinking water contaminated by an infected animal.

Lyme disease is a bacterial disease spread by the bite of a Western Black-Legged tick. It is not transmitted from person to person. It usually starts with a circular rash at the site of the tick bite. Flu-like symptoms and joint aches may follow. If detected early it can be treated with antibiotics. Without treatment, symptoms including arthritis, severe headache, temporary muscle paralysis of facial muscles, and possible development of heart disease may persist for years in the human body.

For more information, go to <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/chd/vector/vlyme.html> or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site, www.cdc.gov, and click on Diseases and Conditions. For information on rodent control, contact the DEH Vector Control Program at (858) 694-2888, or go to www.sdvector.com. A state public service announcement on WNV is available through May at <http://66.34.179.85/cahealthservices>.

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