



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

June 14, 2006

CONTACT: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

COUNTY URGES PUBLIC TO BE CAREFUL OF TICK-BORNE ILLNESSES

Tularemia, Lyme Disease can be Carried by Parasitic Insects; Use Caution When Hiking

As residents gear up for outdoor activities, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and Department of Environmental Health (DEH) Vector Control warn against exposure to ticks.

"When you're hiking or enjoying other activities in the wilderness, be careful that you don't pick up ticks along the way," said Nancy Bowen, M.D., County of San Diego Public Health Officer. "Some carry disease that can last for a long time."

"Vector Control regularly tests ticks for tularemia, a tick-borne illness," said Gary Erbeck, Director, DEH. "We recommend that the public use insect repellent when outdoors. Also, check pets for ticks."

Ticks may carry tularemia, and Lyme disease. Ticks get tularemia by biting infected rodents, rabbits and other animals. Symptoms in humans include lymph node swelling, headache and fever. Other symptoms include skin ulcer at site of bite, fatigue, body aches and nausea. It is not transmitted person to person. It can cause death in rare cases. Tularemia also can be transmitted by 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. The effects of the disease may persist in the human body for several years. 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. Without treatment, symptoms including arthritis, severe headache, temporary muscle paralysis of facial muscles and heart disease may develop. It can be treated with antibiotics; symptoms may resolve on their own.

For more information, go to the following link:

<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/chd/vector/vhantavirus.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 DEH Vector Surveillance and Control Program at (858) 694-2888, or visit the web site at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/>.

###