

## COLORADO TICK FEVER

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### What is Colorado Tick Fever?

Colorado Tick Fever is an illness caused by a virus carried by small mammals, such as ground squirrels, porcupines, and chipmunks, and by ticks.

### Who gets Colorado Tick Fever?

Anyone can get Colorado Tick Fever who lives or travels in areas of the western United States and Canada at elevations above 5000 feet and who comes in contact with infected ticks, especially *Dermacentor andersoni*, also known as the wood tick.

### How is Colorado Tick Fever spread?

People get Colorado Tick Fever from a tick bite. There is no evidence of natural person-to-person transmission. However, rare cases of transmission from blood transfusions have been reported. The virus which causes Colorado Tick Fever may stay in the blood for as long as 4 months after onset of the illness.

### What are the symptoms of Colorado Tick Fever?

The disease causes fever of about 103 F., chills, nausea, and severe headache. These symptoms usually last a few days, go away, and then return for a few days. Sometimes the symptoms include a red, raised rash.

### How soon do symptoms usually appear?

The symptoms generally begin 4 to 5 days after being bitten by an infected tick.

### How should a tick be removed?

Ticks should be removed promptly and carefully by using tweezers and applying gentle steady traction. Do not crush the tick's body when removing it and apply the tweezers as close to the skin as possible to avoid leaving tick mouth parts in the skin. Do not remove ticks with your bare hands. protect your hands with gloves, cloth or tissue and be sure to wash your hands after removing a tick.

### How can Colorado Tick Fever be prevented?

1. Avoid tick infested areas, especially during the warmer months.
2. Wear light colored clothing so ticks can be easily seen. Wear a long sleeved shirt, hat, long pants, and

- tuck your pant legs into your socks.
3. Walk in the center of trails to avoid overhanging grass and brush.
  4. Check your body every few hours for ticks when you spend a lot of time outdoors in tick infested areas. Ticks are most often found on the thigh, arms, underarms and legs. Ticks can be very small (no bigger than a pinhead). Look carefully for new "freckles".
  5. Use insect repellents containing DEET on your skin or permethrin on clothing. Be sure to follow the directions on the container and wash off repellents when going indoors.
  6. Remove attached ticks immediately.

**Where can I get more Information?**

- Your personal doctor
- Your local health department, listed in the telephone directory
- The Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, (801) 538-6191

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