

## Tick Removal Procedures?

- \* Both attached and unattached ticks should be completely removed from humans and pets.
- \* Wash clothing and inspect the body for any additional ticks.

To remove ticks:

- \* Using tweezers, grasp the tick close to the surface of the skin.
- \* Pull slowly and steadily without jerking, twisting, or crushing the tick.
- \* DO NOT use nail polish remover, alcohol, or heat for tick removal.
- \* Apply antiseptic (rubbing alcohol) on the site of the bite.
- \* DO NOT use other methods for tick removal.
- \* **Make a note on your calendar of the day the tick was removed.**

## How can I prevent tickborne illnesses?

- \* Wear light-colored clothing as ticks are more visible.
- \* Tuck pant legs into socks.
- \* Apply insect repellent.
- \* After you come inside, check your body for ticks and remove them. Look along the hairline, around waistbands, underwear and armpits. Ticks like warm, dark places.
- \* Parents need to check their children.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Local Resources

For information on Tickborne Illnesses visit our website at:

<http://www.tulsa-health.org/community-health/epidemiology/>

or write:

Tulsa Health Department  
Planning & Epidemiology  
5051 S. 129th E. Ave.  
Tulsa, OK 74134

Other Contact Information:

Phone: 918/595-4505

Fax: 918/595-4588

E-mail: [epidemiology@tulsa-health.org](mailto:epidemiology@tulsa-health.org)

### For more information on Tickborne Illnesses, visit:

- Oklahoma State Department of Health  
(405) 271-4060  
[www.health.state.ok.us/program/cdd/infec.html](http://www.health.state.ok.us/program/cdd/infec.html)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
(888) 443-7232  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/list\\_tickborne](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/list_tickborne)



**TULSA HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**

Prepared by THD Planning & Epidemiology

# Tickborne Illnesses

Ticks are abundant in Oklahoma and commonly feed on humans and other animals. Although only a small percentage of these ticks are infected with disease-causing bacteria, numerous tickborne illnesses including, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Ehrlichiosis and Tularemia, are reported each year. Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, the most common tickborne illness in Oklahoma, has been on the rise since 2000 through 2005 (with 2005 being the most recent year of data). The rise in cases could be due to better reporting to the state, increased awareness in testing, or there could be an actual increase in the number of cases.

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## What is Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever?

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) is the most severe tickborne illness in the U.S. This disease is an infection from bacteria.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of illness start about 5–10 days after the tick bite. Symptoms may include:

- \* Fever
- \* Nausea and vomiting
- \* Muscle pain
- \* Severe headache
- \* Lack of appetite

Later symptoms include:

- \* Rash (2–5 days after fever onset)
- \* Abdominal pain
- \* Diarrhea

The majority of patients with RMSF are hospitalized.



American Dog Tick; Male & Female

## What ticks are commonly associated with tickborne illnesses in Oklahoma?

- \* American Dog Tick
- \* Lone Star Tick
- \* Deer Tick

# Tickborne Illnesses

## What is Tularemia?

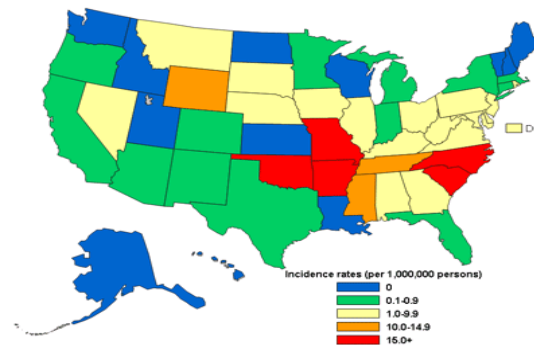
Tularemia is a potentially serious illness that is caused by bacteria and can be passed by a tick bite.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms appear 3 – 5 days after the tick bite but can take up to 14 days and may be any of the following:

- \* Chills
- \* Sudden fever
- \* Headache
- \* Diarrhea
- \* Muscle aches
- \* Joint pain
- \* Progressive weakness

Annual Incidence of Rocky Mountain spotted fever in the United States for 2002



**STARI - Southern Tick-Associated Rash Illness** is common in Oklahoma and has symptoms that are very similar to Lyme Disease such as fatigue, fever, headache, muscle aches, and joint pain.

## What is Ehrlichiosis?

Ehrlichiosis is the general name used to describe many bacterial diseases that affect animals and humans.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms appear 5–10 days after the tick bite and may be any of the following:

- \* Fever
- \* Headache
- \* Fatigue
- \* Muscle aches
- \* Nausea and vomiting
- \* Cough
- \* Diarrhea
- \* Joint pain
- \* Confusion
- \* Occasionally, a rash



Deer Tick



Deer ticks on a quarter

## Is there treatment?

There are treatments for tickborne illnesses. Consult your doctor if you develop any of the symptoms mentioned for RMSF, Tularemia, or Ehrlichiosis, as antibiotics can be prescribed. Prompt treatment is best.