



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Health

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Ticks Test Positive for Lyme Disease Bacteria

The Division of Environmental Health Services' (DEHS) Mosquito and Vector Control Program (MVCP) confirmed that two adult western black-legged ticks collected on January 29, 2015, tested positive for a bacteria that may cause Lyme disease in humans. MVCP routinely checks for the presence of this bacteria in local ticks within the County. The ticks were collected about 4 miles north of Yucaipa along Highway 38 on a hiking trail. This marks the first finding of the bacteria during a tick survey in San Bernardino County since 1991. The MVCP will continue to survey this and other areas to assess Lyme disease risk to San Bernardino County residents and visitors.

Lyme disease is a preventable bacterial illness. In California, Lyme disease is spread to humans and animals from the bite of an infected western black-legged tick. Typical Lyme disease symptoms may include fever, headache, fatigue, and a rash resembling a bull's eye that appears near the site of the bite.

"Lyme disease is still a significant concern in the U.S. and a threat to public health," said DEHS Division Chief Corwin Porter. "We would like everyone to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves from Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases".

In general, an infected tick must be attached and feeding for at least 36 to 48 hours before it can spread the bacteria. While the risk of getting Lyme disease is low, residents are still encouraged to protect themselves and their families by doing the following:

- Avoid areas where ticks are known to occur.
- Stay in the middle of trails; avoid grassy areas, contact with logs, tree trunks and fallen branches or tree limbs in forests.
- Use a repellent registered for use against ticks. Repellents with DEET are effective and can be applied to the skin. Repellents with permethrin should be applied only to clothing. Always follow directions on repellent containers. Be especially careful when applying to children.
- Thoroughly check yourself and others for ticks during, immediately after, and up to three days after activities in tick-infested areas.
- Shower immediately after engaging in outdoor activities where ticks occur. Keep grass along trails, buildings, and camping areas mown.

If you find a tick attached to your skin:

- Grasp tick with tweezers or a tissue, (never with your bare hands) as close to your skin as possible.
- Firmly pull the tick from the skin. Do not jerk, twist or unscrew the tick.



- Do not attempt to remove by burning with cigarette or by applying Vaseline, kerosene, etc.
- Wash your hands and the bite site with soap and water after removing the tick. Apply an antiseptic to the bite area.
- Save the tick for identification! Contact the San Bernardino County. MVCP to determine if tick is a species capable of transmitting Lyme disease.
- Consult your physician if the tick cannot be removed or part of it is left in the skin, or if you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms within 30 days of a tick bite.

The steps being taken by MVCP in response to this discovery are in line with the Countywide Vision to protect the health and safety of residents and visitors.

For more information, please contact the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health Services at (800) 442-2283, visit our website at www.sbcounty.gov/dph/dehs , or the CDPH website at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/TickBorneDiseases.aspx>.