



Spotted Fever Rickettsiosis

Fact Sheet



Spotted fever rickettsiosis (spotted fevers or SFR) is a group of diseases caused by closely related bacteria. These bacteria spread by the bite of an infected tick.



Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF) is the most common SFR. RMSF is not known to be in Maine. Maine residents can become infected when traveling to other states.

Signs and Symptoms



The first sign of many spotted fevers is a dark scab at the site of the bite. This is called an eschar and usually shows up a few days to a week after the bite.

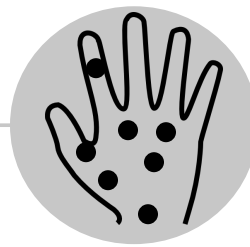
Other signs and symptoms include:



Fever



Headache



Rash



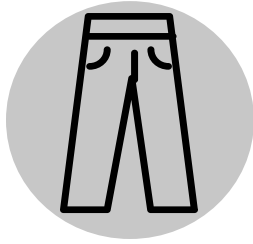
Muscle Aches

Spotted fevers can range from mild to severe. Death can occur.



Talk to a health care provider if you have any of these symptoms after a tick bite. Spotted fevers are diagnosed based on symptoms and confirmed through blood tests. Antibiotics are available for these diseases. RMSF can result in death, especially if it is not recognized and treated early.

Preventing Tick Bites



Wear light-colored, long-sleeved clothing. Tuck your pants into your socks.



Use an EPA-approved repellent.



Rake your leaves and keep your lawn mowed.



Do daily tick checks and check your pets too.

Safe Tick Removal



Use a tick spoon or fine-tipped tweezers to remove a tick.

-Using tweezers, grab the tick close to the skin and use firm, steady pressure to pull the tick out. Do not use twisting motions.

-Using a tick spoon, line the notch of the spoon up with the head of the tick and gently scoop.

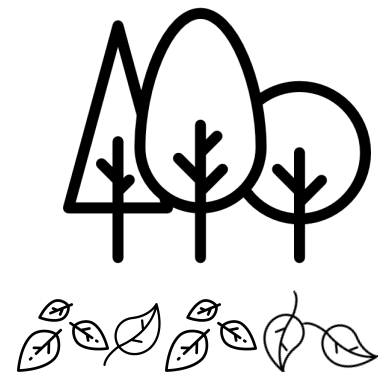
Do not use nail polish, matches, or petroleum jelly to remove the tick. These methods increase the risk of localized skin infection.

Where are Ticks Found?

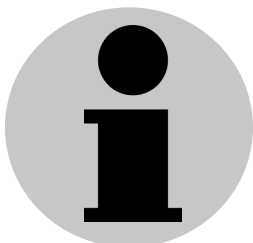
Areas where ticks live include:

- Wooded or forested areas
- Wild, unmaintained landscapes
- Brush or leaf piles
- Open areas with high grass

Ticks are active at any temperature above freezing.



For More Information



1. <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/SFR>
2. www.maine.gov/dhhs/tickfaq (For frequently asked tick questions)
3. www.cdc.gov/rmsf and www.cdc.gov/other spotted fever
4. ticks.umaine.edu (To submit a tick for identification)
5. www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you (For EPA approved repellents)

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.