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1020 Washington St. N, Twin Falls, Idaho  
208-737-5900 [www.phd5.idaho.gov](http://www.phd5.idaho.gov)

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**PRESS RELEASE-For Immediate Release**

Contact: Cheryle Becker, Epidemiologist Manager, 737-5936

**South Central Public Health Investigates Several Tick-Borne Infections**

TWIN FALLS- South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) has recently investigated three different reports of tick-borne infections. Two reports of Lyme disease have been investigated, one case was actually contracted outside of Idaho. One case of Ehrlichiosis was also reported, but not confirmed. Last week, a Blaine county woman in her forties was diagnosed with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF). These represent the first cases of tick-borne illnesses reported in the eight county area of the SCPHD in 2008. Relatively few cases of these diseases are usually reported in south central Idaho.

All three diseases are caused by infections carried by several types of ticks. Symptoms of the diseases usually begin about 3 to 30 days after a tick bite. Initial symptoms may include fever, nausea, vomiting, muscle pain, lack of appetite, severe headache, abdominal pain, joint pain, and diarrhea. Persons with RMSF and Lyme disease may have a rash associated with the disease. The rash accompanying RMSF covers the body, including the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. The rash with Lyme disease is more localized and appears in a circular fashion, many times with a clear area in the center. RMSF can be a severe illness, and the majority of patients are hospitalized.

The following are recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prevent tick-borne infections:

- Wear light-colored clothing which allows you to see ticks that are crawling on your clothing.
- Tuck your pants legs into your socks so that ticks cannot crawl up the inside of your pants legs.

- Apply repellents to discourage tick attachment. Repellents containing permethrin can be sprayed on boots and clothing and will last for several days. Repellents containing DEET (n, n-diethyl-m-toluamide) can be applied to the skin, but will last only a few hours before reapplication is necessary. Use DEET with caution on children. Application of large amounts of DEET on children has been associated with adverse reactions.
- Conduct a body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas by searching your entire body for ticks. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Remove any tick you find on your body.
- Parents should check their children for ticks when returning from potentially tick-infested areas, especially in the hair. Ticks may also be carried into the household on clothing and pets, so both should be examined carefully to exclude ticks that may attach later.

Persons experiencing symptoms of a tick-borne infection should see their health care provider. With the recent discovery of a case of West Nile Virus infection in Twin Falls County, it is also important to remember that application of insect repellants may prevent both infections.

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