

## **ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER**

Rocky Mountain spotted fever is a disease passed on to humans through the bite of an infected tick. It cannot be spread from one person to another. The disease occurs more often in the East than the West, even though it was named for the Rocky Mountain Region of the United States. Most cases occur in the spring and summer months.

### **How should the tick be removed?**

Although all ticks are not infected, a tick on the body should be removed carefully and as soon as possible. Ticks are best removed with tweezers or a piece of tissue or paper towel. Slowly pull straight back when removing the tick - *do not twist or jerk because this may leave the mouth parts under the skin which could cause infection*. Be sure to wash your hands after removing or touching a tick. Paint the bite with alcohol or merthiolate.

### **What are the signs and symptoms?**

If the tick was infected, Rocky Mountain spotted fever symptoms may occur within two weeks. Symptoms may include chills, fever, headache, pains in the joints and a rash. Nervous symptoms may occur such as being unable to stay still or to sleep.

In severe cases, the person may go into a coma. If you or someone close to you shows these symptoms, be sure to tell this to the doctor. Without proper early treatment, death may occur. Only a doctor can give proper treatment for Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

### **How can it be prevented?**

Avoid tick infested areas such as woods and heavy brush. However, if you must go into these areas, wear protective clothing such as high boots and long sleeves and use a repellent. Tuck your pants legs into your socks or boots and your shirt into your pants. Check yourself and others with you twice a day.

Dogs and cats which run at large may bring ticks into the house. These pets should be inspected and any ticks found should be removed and destroyed. Children who play out-of-doors should be checked for ticks twice a day during the warm months. Pay special attention to the child's head.

Since ticks like brushy places, weeds should be kept cut near houses. Approved pesticides may be used to treat limited areas. Call your health department or agricultural extension agent for more information.