

Countywide Services Agency

Department of
Health and Human Services

Division of Public Health

Glennah Trochet, M.D.

County Health Officer



Steven C. Szalay, Interim County Executive

Bruce Wagstaff, Interim Administrator

Ann Edwards-Buckley, Director

County of Sacramento

July 27, 2010

Media contact: Laurie Slothower, (916) 875-4493

Cell phone: (916) 956-3130

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local tularemia case underscores need to protect against ticks

SACRAMENTO – A human case of tularemia — an infectious disease spread by ticks — has been identified as originating in Sacramento County. This underscores the need for residents to protect themselves against tick bites, county health officials said today.

The confirmed case occurred in a Sacramento County resident who received a tick bite. Ticks collected by the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District in the area where the tick bite occurred were recently confirmed to be carrying *Francisella tularensis*, the bacterium that causes the disease.

F. tularensis can be carried by ticks, biting flies and wild animals such as rabbits. People are most likely to become infected from being bitten by a tick carrying the disease, or by handling infected animals. Symptoms may include fever, fatigue, and a skin ulcer near the site of the tick bite. However, severe cases may lead to pneumonia and even death. The disease is not transmitted person-to-person.

“This is another reason to remind people who enjoy outdoor activities to avoid exposure to ticks and to use insect repellent,” says Sacramento County Public Health Officer Glennah Trochet, M.D. “Although the tick sample was from the Folsom area, ticks carrying tularemia are likely to be found throughout the county.”

You can prevent exposure to ticks by taking the following actions:

- When outdoors use insect repellent containing DEET on your skin, or treat clothing with repellent containing permethrin, to prevent tick bites. Follow directions on the label. (The Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District provides free insect repellent at their office, 8631 Bond Road in Elk Grove.)
- Know where to expect ticks. Ticks live in wooded or grassy areas. Stay on groomed trails and walk in the center of trails to avoid ticks.
- When entering areas infested with ticks, wear long sleeves, long pants, and long socks to protect your skin. Tuck pants into socks.
- Examine clothing and skin frequently for ticks

- Remove ticks promptly with tweezers.
- Teach children not to handle sick or dead animals.

For more information, visit Sacramento County Public Health at www.SCPH.com

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