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Monthly Safety Blast

Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education

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Ticks: Better Check Yourself

Tick-borne pathogens can be passed to humans by the bite of infected ticks. Ticks can be infected with bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Some of the most common tick-borne diseases in the United States include: Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and an emerging tick disease, (POW) Powassan encephalitis.

Outdoor workers, like those who work in the agricultural, forestry or logging industries are at risk. Work areas with high grass, woods, and bushes are areas where ticks inhabit. Agricultural workers should take extra precautions to protect themselves in summer and in seasons when ticks are most active.

You can reduce your risk of being infected with tick borne diseases by using tick repellents, wearing long sleeves and pants, tucking in pants into boots or socks, and tucking in shirts into pants, to prevent ticks from crawling inside your clothing. You can also avoid going into bushy and/or wooded areas and perform thorough tick checks after spending time working (or playing) outdoors.



If you do find a tick attached to the skin, fine tipped tweezers can be used to remove the tick efficiently. Grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible. Pull upward with even pressure. Make sure the mouth of the tick is removed. If you cannot remove the head with the tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal. After removing the tick, clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water. Seal the tick in a plastic bag or bottle and label it with the date and location of the bite. Place the tick in the freezer in case the person bit develops symptoms and the tick needs to be tested for disease(s).

Many tick borne diseases can have similar symptoms. If you were bitten and develop symptoms, see a health care provider to be evaluated. Symptoms could include fever/chills, aches and pains, headache, fatigue and muscle aches. With Lyme disease there may also be joint pain and a circular rash that may appear within 3-30 days. With POW, symptoms could also include vomiting, weakness and confusion, loss of coordination, speech difficulties and seizures. Early recognition and treatment of the

infections decreases the risk of complications. See your doctor immediately if you have been bitten by a tick and experience any of the symptoms described here.



Take the [Ticks: Better Check Yourself](#) quiz to test your knowledge!

Resources:

- www.cdc.gov

Disclaimer: The facts and information listed above are merely suggestions for your safety, but are in no way a comprehensive and exhausted list of all actions needed to insure your safety.

Monthly Blast written by Megan Kelley, 2017 Noble Foundation/SW Ag Center Summer Intern

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