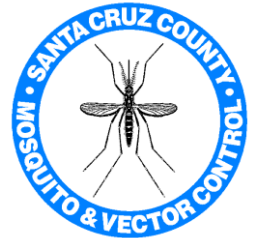


County of Santa Cruz



Office of the Agricultural Commissioner Mosquito and Vector Control CSA 53

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David Sanford, Agricultural Commissioner Amanda Poulsen, Assistant Manager

Date: January 16, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUBJECT: TICKS AND DISEASE RISK

CONTACT: AMANDA POULSEN (831) 454-2590

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AND STATE OF CALIFORNIA PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES CAUTION RESIDENTS ABOUT TICKS AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES

Santa Cruz, CA – 16 January 2024 – Officials at Santa Cruz County Mosquito and Vector Control (SCCMVC) remind residents that the onset of the first rains start the season for adult western black-legged ticks (*Ixodes pacificus*). This tick is the primary vector of Lyme disease in Santa Cruz County.

Approximately 1% of adult and 7% of nymphal (immature) Western black-legged ticks in this county are infected with the bacteria that can cause Lyme disease. In 2023, there were 13 reported human cases of Lyme disease in Santa Cruz County.

The risk of being bitten by ticks may be reduced with the following precautions:

- Walk (and keep pets) on trails and avoid tall grasses, trail margins, brush, and logs.
- Use EPA-registered repellent for use against ticks; always follow label directions. Products with a concentration of 20% DEET or higher, and/or treating clothes and shoes with permethrin before entering tick habitat are recommended.
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Check yourself, children, and your pets thoroughly for ticks after time outdoors. Remove ticks as soon as you find them using tweezers and pulling straight out.
- Shower and launder clothes (on high heat) soon after activity in tick habitat.

Removing a tick shortly after it attaches (less than 24 hours) can prevent transmission of Lyme diseases and other tick-borne diseases. If you remove a tick and have questions about potential disease risk, save it for identification:

1. Place the tick (preferably alive) in a ziplock bag with a wet papertowel/cotton ball.
2. Disinfect the wound site.
3. Call/email/fill out the electronic Service Request form on our website to make an appointment for identification and consultation.

Consult your healthcare provider if you have been bitten by a tick or were in an area where ticks occur and are concerned about Lyme disease. Painful redness that occurs less than 24 hours after a tick bite and does not expand is likely a local allergic reaction to the tick bite. Early Lyme disease can include flu-like symptoms and often an expanding, painless rash. Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics and most patients recover without complications, particularly when the disease is diagnosed early. If left untreated, Lyme disease can progress to arthritis and in some cases serious nervous system problems.

Note that a Lyme disease diagnosis cannot be confirmed or out-ruled by the results of a tick test alone. For more information on testing, please contact Mosquito and Vector Control.



Western black-legged ticks. Pictured from left to right: larvae, nymph, adult male, adult female. (Photo courtesy of CDPH).

Santa Cruz County Mosquito & Vector Control can help with tick identification and provide Lyme Disease information.

Contact:

Phone: (831) 454-2590

Email: pesthelp@santacruzcounty.us

Website: www.agdept.com under Mosquito Abatement/Vector Control. You can submit a request for service online.

Office Located: 640 Capitola Road, Santa Cruz

Also visit: www.cdph.ca.gov for more information on ticks and tick-borne diseases.