

News Release

Contact: Jennifer Sizemore
(702) 383-1225

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A rare tick-borne disease, identified in Clark County

(Las Vegas, Nev. – October 6, 2000) – The Clark County Health District (CCHD) has identified three cases of relapsing fever (a disease transmitted through the bite of a tick) among persons residing on Mount Charleston. Due to this finding, and coupled with the identification of animals in the area carrying the plague virus, the Health District is warning residents and visitors of the Mt. Charleston area to exercise the proper precautions against flea and tick bites.

Relapsing fever is an uncommon disease caused by bacteria. Onset of the symptoms occur three to 11 days after infection and include a sudden fever, chills, headache and muscle aches. Other possible symptoms include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and rash. Though many cases of relapsing fever eventually resolve on their own, some people become critically ill and women who are pregnant are at high risk for miscarriage. Recently in Washington State an infant died seven days after birth due to transmission of the disease from the mother.

Any person who has visited an area that is known to have ticks, and develops a sudden fever, should contact a physician. This is especially important for expectant mothers. As an added precaution the Health District is posting signs throughout the Mt. Charleston area warning of the presence of both plague and relapsing fever.

(more)

Of the three cases identified, one was originally diagnosed as Lyme disease. The clinical appearance of tick-borne diseases is not always distinctive and in laboratory testing they may cross react. The Health District has issued an alert to the medical community, which includes information regarding the appropriate laboratory tests for differentiating the diseases. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will perform testing of suspected cases.

For more information about relapsing fever or plague, contact the Health District, Office of Epidemiology at (702) 383-1378 or the Environmental Health Division at (702) 383-1251.

####