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"Protecting the health of all Californians"

AUGUST 20, 2015

CDPH Investigates Cases of Human Plague

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is investigating cases of human plague in California, and conducting an environmental evaluation in the Stanislaus National Forest, Yosemite National Park and the surrounding areas. The department began investigating after a child from Los Angeles County became ill and was hospitalized after visiting the Stanislaus National Forest and camping at Crane Flat Campground in Yosemite National Park. CDPH was then notified of a presumptive positive case contracted by a recent visitor to California from Georgia who had also been vacationing in Yosemite. Confirmatory testing is being conducted by the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Although the presence of plague has been confirmed in wild rodents over the past two weeks at Crane Flat and Tuolumne Meadows campgrounds, the risk to human health remains low. Action to protect human and wildlife health by closing and treating campgrounds was taken out of an abundance of caution. Park visitors are being notified by Yosemite of camp treatments and possible plague risks and are being provided information on how to prevent plague transmission.

Yosemite National Park and all campgrounds and facilities, except Tuolumne Meadows, remain open to visitors.

Human cases of plague are rare, with the last reported human infection in California occurring in 2006. Plague is readily treatable when diagnosed early. Plague is an infectious bacterial disease that is carried by squirrels, chipmunks and other wild rodents and their fleas. In 2014, non-human plague activity was detected in animals in seven counties: El Dorado, Mariposa, Modoc, Plumas, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Sierra.

Although this is a rare disease, people should protect themselves from infection by avoiding any contact with wild rodents. Protect your pets from fleas and keep them away from wild animals. Early symptoms of plague include high fever, chills, nausea, weakness and swollen lymph nodes in the neck, armpit or groin. People who develop these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention and notify their health care provider that they have been camping or out in the wilderness and have been exposed to rodents and fleas.

CDPH is working closely with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH),

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Yosemite National Park and the U. S. Forest Service.

"Although this is a rare disease, and the current risk to humans is low, eliminating the fleas is the best way to protect the public from the disease."

*-Dr. Karen Smith
State Public Health
Officer*



CDPH conducts flea control in rodent burrows to reduce plague risk.

UPCOMING CDPH EVENTS

CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE QUALITY SEMI-ANNUAL STAKEHOLDER FORUM

SEPTEMBER 4TH
10 A.M. – 12 P.M.
1500 CAPITOL AVE

OFFICE OF PROBLEM GAMBLING'S STATEWIDE PROBLEM GAMBLING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 15TH
SACRAMENTO

OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY QUARTERLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 29TH
SACRAMENTO

CONNECT

