Eliminating Rocky Mountain spotted fever

in Arizona Tribal Communities

More than **580 cases of Rocky Mountain spotted fever** (RMSF), a bacterial disease spread by the bite of an infected tick, were reported in Arizona tribal communities between 2002 and 2024, leading to **28 deaths. Half were children.** Some communities had 70 times the national rate for spotted fever.

CDC partners with Arizona tribal communities and state public health officials, and companies interested in companion animal health to eliminate deaths from RMSF in impacted communities by 2025, a targeted outcome in the National Public Health Strategy to Prevent and Control Vector-Borne Diseases in People.

There have been **zero reported deaths from RMSF in tribal communities** since 2019.

CDC COLLABORATION AND INVESTMENTS

Strengthened local infrastructure.

Improved monitoring for ticks and enhanced testing for and reporting of RMSF in people, contributing to an early warning system to prevent illness and death.

Created knowledge sharing opportunities.

Educated healthcare providers and communities.

Trained 150 healthcare providers in five tribes to recognize symptoms, diagnose, and treat patients from 2023 to 2024.

Developed and distributed 30 culturally relevant educational materials, including pamphlets and school curricula sharing how to prevent tick bites and check for ticks.

Implemented tick and animal control interventions.

Assisted in applying pesticides to an average of 2,700 homes each year from 2019 to 2023.

Supported opening a new animal clinic, and seven community campaigns in 2024 with 6,000 dogs treated with products to prevent tick bites. Dogs can carry ticks that also bite people.

Despite this major achievement, our work is not over. Diseases spread by ticks increasingly threaten people in the United States. Public health must remain vigilant to maintain zero RMSF deaths. This includes monitoring and educating about RMSF, investing in innovative opportunities like canine vaccine research, and scaling effective strategies to prevent tick bites.

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