



NEWS RELEASE

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Dog tests positive for plague following a probable exposure near Divide Trail Loop in Teller County *Public Health urges residents to take precautions to prevent exposure*

Teller County, CO – After a dog tested positive for plague following a probable exposure near the Divide Trail Loop at Hayden Divide Park in Teller County, Public Health is urging residents to take precautions to prevent exposure to the plague.

While plague is common in the summer months, taking simple precautions can lower the risk of transmission to pets and humans.

Plague is caused by bacteria (*Yersinia pestis*) that can be spread to people and pets by the bites of infected fleas or by direct contact with infected animals. People or pets with direct exposure to fleas or wildlife in the affected areas may be at risk. People who think they have been exposed should contact a health care provider immediately. Symptoms may include sudden fever, headache, chills, weakness, and tender, painful lymph nodes. If caught early, plague is treatable with antibiotics in both people and pets.

Plague is frequently detected in prairie dogs, squirrels, rabbits, chipmunks and other rodents. The use of veterinary-approved flea control products is strongly advised for pets.

People should take the following precautions to protect themselves, their pets and stock animals:

- Avoid fleas. Protect humans with insect/flea repellent and animals with a veterinary-approved flea treatment.
- Do not directly handle any wildlife.
- **Keep pets on a leash—don't allow them to roam freely.**
- Keep pets away from wildlife, especially dead rodents and rabbits.
- Don't let dogs or cats hunt prairie dogs, other rodents, or rabbits.
- Do not feed wildlife—this attracts them to your property, brings them in close contact, and increases the risk of disease transmission.

- See a physician if you become ill with a high fever and/or swollen lymph nodes. Plague is a treatable illness.
- Contact a veterinarian immediately if your pet or livestock animals become ill with a high fever and/or an abscess or swollen lymph nodes. Mammals with plague can transmit the illness to humans.
- Be aware of rodent and rabbit populations in your area and report sudden die-offs or multiple dead animals to El Paso County Public Health at (719) 578-3220 or to Teller County Public Health and Environment at (719) 687-6416.

For more information, visit:

- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website](#)
- [Teller County Public Health and Environment's website](#)
- [El Paso County Public Health's website](#)