



Prevent • Promote • Protect

NEWS

www.pueblohealthdept.org

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Tips to Protect your Family from Critters that may Spread Disease in the Spring

Spring is the time of year when wild animals are awakening from their winter slumber. The Pueblo City-County Health Department wants to keep you and your pets safe from animal diseases. Ensure your safety by taking steps to protect your home, self, and pets.

“The warmer weather of spring is inviting to spend outdoors; however, with it, we are also seeing more activity of wild critters. This is the time to protect yourself and your family from diseases the animals may carry,” stated Vicki Carlton, Consumer Protection Program Manager at the Pueblo City-County Health Department. Carlton added, “I encourage everyone to review these public health tips to protect themselves and their family members.”

Protect Your Home

Excluding wild animals from in and around your home is a key factor in reducing the risk to you and your pets. This can be done by correcting structural defects and damaged areas of your home, garage, and outbuildings such as:

- Holes in and around the roof, foundation, or trailer skirting.
- Missing mortar or metal flashing around a chimney.
- Loose or damaged siding.
- Damaged eaves, soffits, or louvers.
- Large gaps and openings around electrical lines, plumbing and drain pipes, conduits, gas lines, air conditioners and ducts, and TV lines.
- Gaps beneath exterior doorways and tears in window screens.

If infestation does occur, precautions must be taken to ensure a safe clean-up. It is advised to open doors and windows for 30 minutes prior to cleaning to air out the space. Use disposable gloves, a N95 mask or better, and a solution of 9 parts water to 1 part bleach to disinfect the area. Spray all droppings, nesting areas, or dead carcasses with the bleach solution and allow it to soak for 10 minutes. Next, wipe up the area with a paper towel and dispose of the towel in an outdoor garbage receptacle. Disinfect gloves before removing them and then thoroughly wash your hands.

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Protect Your /Self

You can take steps to protect yourself from biting insects that carry disease. An insect repellent containing DEET should be applied when outdoors, especially during recreational activities and yard work. While outdoors, eliminate places that animals can hide and breed around your home by removing brush, rock piles, trash, piles of lumber, and draining standing water. A respirator mask is recommended for activities that raise dust like raking or mowing. If a dead wild animal is found on your property, the Pueblo City-County Health Department may want to track the report and/or pick up the dead animal for testing. You may call (719) 583-4307 to report these incidents. If the animal carcass is not wanted for testing, you can dispose of it safely.

First, put on an insect repellent containing DEET. Then, use a long-handled shovel to place the dead animal in a garbage bag. Lastly, place the bag in an outdoor garbage can. Always wash your hands when finished with all outdoor activities or anytime you believe contamination has occurred.

Protect Your Pets

Keep your pets current on rabies vaccinations and treat them for fleas and ticks regularly. Consult your veterinarian to discuss safe and appropriate flea and tick prevention products; flea collars have not been proven effective. Do not allow pets to hunt or roam especially in areas with apparent rodent activity, such as prairie dog colonies. Keep pets leashed or under close observation when outdoors. If pets become ill, take them to the veterinarian promptly for evaluation and treatment.

For more information contact the Pueblo City-County Health Department at (719) 583-4307.

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