

How is TBRF diagnosed and treated?

TBRF is diagnosed in the laboratory when the bacteria can be seen in the person's blood. Antibiotics are used to treat TBRF and most people with TBRF start feeling better about 24 hours after beginning treatment. People rarely develop long-term problems or die from TBRF.

How do I protect myself from TBRF?

When you visit an area where soft ticks may be found:

- Keep rodents out of buildings.
- Remove rodent nests from in and around the home.
- Inspect the inside and outside of the building for evidence of rodents.



- Store food in well-sealed containers.
- Pull beds away from the walls and avoid sleeping on the floor.
- Change and wash all bedding before use.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State of California

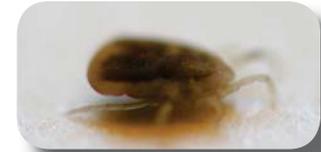
Kimberly Belshé, Secretary
Health and Human Services Agency

Sandra Shewry, Director
California Department of Health Services

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Facts About Tick-Borne Relapsing Fever In California



State of California
Department of Health Services
Vector-Borne Disease Section
1616 Capitol Avenue, MS 7307
P.O. Box 997413
Sacramento, CA 95899-7413
(916) 552-9730

Tick-borne relapsing fever (TBRF) is an illness caused by bacteria that are carried by soft ticks. Although TBRF is rare in California, it can cause serious illness in people.

How do people get TBRF?

People get TBRF when they are bitten by an infected soft tick. You cannot get TBRF from another person. The few people who get sick with



TBRF are infected in the summer while visiting mountain areas and staying in cabins or buildings that are rodent and tick infested.

What does a soft tick look like?



Engorged adult soft tick next to a dime.

Where are soft ticks found in California?



Soft ticks are found mainly in forested foothill and mountain regions between 3,000 and 9,000 feet (**green** areas on the map).

Soft ticks live in dark, cool places such as rodent nests, shaded wood piles outside buildings, and between walls or beneath floorboards inside buildings.



Soft ticks prefer to feed on rodents like squirrels, chipmunks, or mice. If those rodents are scarce, soft ticks may seek out other animals to feed on, including humans.

How would I know if I have TBRF?

Soft ticks crawl out from walls and rodent nests to feed at night. The bite of a soft tick is painless and the tick is only attached to the skin for a few minutes. Most people are bitten while they sleep and never realize it.

About a week after being bitten by an infected tick, persons with TBRF develop a sudden high fever, chills, headache, and muscle aches. They may also have nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, and a rash. These symptoms last three to five days, and then quickly disappear.



A few days later, the fever and symptoms occur again (relapse). This cycle may continue for several weeks if not treated. If you develop these symptoms you should see your doctor right away.