



**U.S. Forest Service
Inyo National Forest
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News Release

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Inyo National Forest Advisory: Increase in Plague Activity in the Sierra Nevada.

Based upon recent incidents of rodents with plague and a handful of cases where plague was contracted by people visiting nearby federal lands, the Inyo National Forest would like to advise recreationalists and residents to take the following steps as a matter of caution while visiting the Inyo National Forest.

- Never feed squirrels, chipmunks or other rodents and never touch sick or dead rodents.
- Avoid walking or camping near rodent burrows.
- Wear long pants tucked into socks or boot tops to reduce exposure to fleas.
- Spray insect repellent containing DEET on skin and clothing, especially socks and pant cuffs to reduce exposure to fleas.
- Keep wild rodents out of homes, trailers, and outbuildings and away from pets.

If you notice dead rodents without obvious signs of injury while recreating, please contact your local health department (Mono County: 760-924-1830; Inyo County: 760-873-7868) or the California Department of Public Health's Vector-Borne Disease Section at 916-552-9730. If possible, note the type of rodent (i.e. mouse, chipmunk, squirrel, etc.), location and date seen. If you are in a campground, please notify the campground host in addition to the health department.

Early symptoms of plague may 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.

Although the presence of plague has been confirmed in wild rodents over the past few weeks in nearby areas, the risk to human health remains low. In California, plague-infected animals are most likely to be found in the foothills and mountains.

The [California Department of Public Health](#) has [plague information](#), including precautions people can take to minimize their risk.

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