

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Date: September 21, 2015

Contact: Kasey Knutson, Public Information Officer, 509-962-7515

---

### **Preventing and Reducing Rat Infestations**

The Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) has received nineteen rat related phone complaints during 2015 and one power outage in August was reported by the City of Ellensburg. No direct human exposures or reports of diseases transmitted by rats have been reported to KCPHD.

“Our focus is on prevention and education for people in Ellensburg to prevent rat infestations at their private residences,” states Administrator Robin Read. “Lessening the chance for interaction with a vector lessens the chance of a vector borne disease,” asserts Ms. Read. “We want people to limit their exposure.”

The types of rats in this region are not known to transmit Hantavirus or rabies; however, rats can transmit diseases such as rat bite fever and salmonella. There have been no reported cases of rat bite fever or rat-related salmonella.

Homeowners may contact KCPHD or see our website for information on preventing and reducing rat infestations. However, we do not test rats when there has not been a human exposure and we do not conduct home assessments. Rat abatement and control is the responsibility of the property owner.

If you are concerned about rats on your property, it is recommended that you contact a pest control service. Other tips to keep rats away include:

- Prevent access to food and water
- Store food (pet, livestock, human) in rat proof building, rooms, and containers
- Keep garbage in cans and other sealed containers
- Harvest ripe fruit off trees and pick up fruit that falls to the ground
- Feed pets inside and clean up droppings
- Prevent access to bird feeders
- Keep firewood off the ground and away from buildings and fences
- Thin or remove dense vegetation
- Keep outbuildings tightly closed

For additional information about prevention, you can visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s site at [http://www.cdc.gov/rodents/prevent\\_infestations/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/rodents/prevent_infestations/index.html), the Washington State Department of Health <http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Pests/Rodents>, or you can visit the Kittitas County Public Health Department’s website at <http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health/default.aspx>

###