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Rickettsia

[rĭ-ket'se-ə]

Genus of gram-negative, rod-shaped or coccoid bacteria that are transmitted by lice, fleas, ticks and mites. Named after American pathologist Howard Taylor Ricketts; despite the similar name, *Rickettsia* spp. do not cause rickets (from the Greek *rhakhis*, "spine"), a disorder of bone development caused by vitamin deficiency.

Sources: Dorland's illustrated medical dictionary. 30th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders; 2003. and Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. 11th ed. Springfield (MA): Merriam-Webster's, Inc; 2003.

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