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Public Health
Prevent · Promote · Protect

Press Release

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LYME & TICK-RELATED DISEASE ON THE RISE

As summer approaches, more people will be enjoying the outdoors to experience what Mother Nature has to offer. Although the beauty of nature offers much to enjoy, ticks are not one of them. The Logan County Department of Public Health (LCDPH) urges everyone to play it safe when outdoors by checking themselves for ticks as they can spread disease. In fact, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Lyme disease, a tick-borne disease, is more common than any other vector-borne disease in the United States. If outdoors, it is very important that people are aware of ticks and how to prevent bites.

Hiking or spending time in areas where ticks live, such as wooded areas, tall grass, and brush, puts people at most risk. It is most important for people to check themselves, their pets, and to help their kids with a tick check after spending time in these areas. If a tick is found, removing the tick within a 24-hour period will reduce the potential for disease transmission. It is very important, however, to follow correct procedures to remove the tick. If the tick is removed improperly, the threat of disease may remain prevalent.

In addition to Lyme disease, Spotted Fever Group Rickettsiosis (SFGR), tularemia, ehrlichiosis, and babesiosis represent other tickborne diseases. One form of SFGR is Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, which if left untreated, can cause death in five days.

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IDPH recommends the following tips for how to avoid tickborne illness while enjoying the outdoors:

- Learn about tick removal and symptom awareness on the IDPH website.
- Walk in the center of trails. Avoid wooded, brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easier to find. Tuck long pants into socks and boots.
- Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent containing 20% DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus according to label directions.
- Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing and camping gear and remain protective through several washings.
- Conduct full-body tick checks on family members (underarms, ears, belly button, behind knees, between legs, waist, hair and scalp) every two to three hours. Also check any gear or pets taken on outings.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high for 10 minutes (or one hour for damp clothes) to kill ticks.
- Shower within two hours after coming indoors.

If you become ill with a fever and/or rash after being outdoors or in an area where ticks may be present, contact your health care provider as some tickborne diseases can be life-threatening. To learn more about tick awareness, disease prevention, and tick removal, you can visit the environmental health section of the IDPH website at www.dph.illinois.gov. On the IDPH website, you can also view a Tick Surveillance Map which reveals where various tick species have been confirmed throughout Illinois. For more information regarding ticks, you can also contact the Logan County Department of Public Health at 217-735-2317, or visit their website at WWW.LCDPH.ORG.

Information Source: IDPH

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