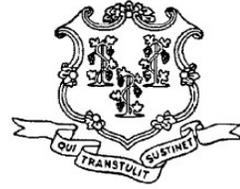


News Release



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Department of Public Health Urges Residents to Take Steps to Prevent Lyme Disease

HARTFORD -- As warm weather arrives in Connecticut, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) urges the public to take steps to prevent Lyme disease.

“With the summer here, many people will be spending their time outdoors, increasing their risk for Lyme disease” said DPH Commissioner Dr. J. Robert Galvin. “By taking a few relatively simple precautions, people can still enjoy the outdoors and decrease their chances of being infected.”

Lyme disease is caused by a bacterial infection transmitted to humans by the bite of infected blacklegged (deer) ticks. Lyme disease can be acquired in any Connecticut town, particularly in wooded areas of the state where deer are abundant. During 2008, the DPH identified 3,896 cases of Lyme disease.

“The majority of Lyme disease cases are likely acquired from deer tick bites occurring near the home,” stated Dr. Galvin. “The following steps can significantly help reduce the risk of infection when you are outdoors in your own back yard, or enjoying other warm weather activities:”

- **PERSONAL PROTECTION:**
 - o Use insect repellent containing 20%-30% DEET. Follow package instructions. Do not apply under clothing or to children under 2 months.
 - o Wear light-colored clothing and tuck long pants into the socks to help keep them off of your skin. Also, wear close-toed shoes.
 - o Do thorough tick checks of yourself, your children and pets. Completely remove any ticks found. Ticks attached to skin for less than 24 hours are unlikely to transmit Lyme disease.
 - o Research has found, that bathing within 2 hours may also reduce the risk of Lyme disease transmission.
- **REMOVING A TICK:**
 - o Using tweezers, grasp the tick mouthparts as close to the skin as possible, and pull the tick out with steady pressure. Do not yank the tick out.
 - o Wash the area with soap and water, then dry and apply a topical antiseptic.
 - o Do not use a hot match, nail polish remover, petroleum jelly or other substances to remove ticks.
 - o Contact your physician if you are bitten and watch for early symptoms.

- **LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT:**
 - o Keep grass mowed.
 - o Remove leaf litter, brush, and tall weeds from around the home and at the lawn's edge.
 - o Use plantings that do not attract deer or exclude deer through various types of fencing.
 - o Move firewood, and birdhouses and feeders away from the home.
 - o Create a 3-foot or wider wood chip, mulch, or gravel barrier between your lawn and woods.
- **PET MANAGEMENT:**
 - o Minimize time that dogs and cats spend outdoors and access to areas with leaf litter, brush, and tall weeds. This may help reduce the number of ticks brought back into the home.
 - o Check pets for ticks when they come indoors.
 - o Check with your veterinarian regarding methods to prevent your pet from tick bites.

(For additional information on ticks and tick-bite prevention including landscape management, please visit: <http://www.ct.gov/caes> and click "Tick Management Handbook.")

While these steps can significantly reduce your chances of Lyme disease infection, no method is 100% effective. Lyme disease can still infect you, your children, or your pets. However, Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics. If caught early, recovery outcomes are excellent.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease include:

- o **Rash** – Lyme disease is frequently characterized by an expanding red rash at the site of the tick bite. Rashes can occur anywhere on the body, and vary in size and shape. The rash can be warm to the touch, but is not usually painful or itchy.
- o **Fever and/or chills**
- o **Fatigue**
- o **Muscle and joint pain**
- o **Stiff neck**
- o **Headache**

Left untreated, Lyme disease infection can worsen and include symptoms involving joint swelling (Lyme arthritis), neurologic and cardiac complications. If you experience any of these symptoms after a tick bite, contact your primary care physician right away.

For additional information on Lyme disease, visit the DPH web site at <http://www.ct.gov/dph> and click "Programs and Services" for the Lyme disease link, or call 860-509-7994.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at <http://www.ct.gov/dph> or call (860) 509-7270.