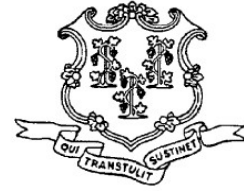


News



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DPH: Take Steps to Prevent Tick Bites

Simple steps effective ways to help prevent tick bites and tick-borne diseases.

Hartford – With warm weather upon us and people spending more time outdoors, the Department of Public Health (DPH) reminds Connecticut residents to take steps to prevent tick bites and tick-borne diseases.

“After a long winter, many of us are eager to get outside and enjoy the outdoors. Unfortunately, this is also the time of year that ticks and tick nymphs are looking for hosts, including people and pets, to feed from,” said DPH public health veterinarian Dr. Randall Nelson. “Tick-borne diseases, like Lyme Disease, are transmitted when ticks and tick nymphs are feeding. Simple steps like using insect repellent and showering within two hours of coming indoors are effective ways to help prevent tick bites and tick-borne diseases.”

Ticks grasp passing hosts from leaf litter, tips of grass, and shrubbery. Most ticks are probably picked up on the lower legs and then crawl up the body to find a place to feed. Adult ticks will, however, look for a host in the shrub layer several feet above the ground, about or above the height of children. Tick nymphs (the stage before they become adult ticks) are small and often overlooked or mistaken for freckles.

In Connecticut, the peak months for acquiring infections from ticks are May through July. Ticks in Connecticut can carry a variety of disease causing agents, including rickettsia, bacteria, and protozoa. People can become infected with more than one disease with just one tick bite. Tick-borne diseases found in Connecticut include Lyme disease, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

To prevent tick bites, DPH recommends the following:

- Avoid tall grass and over-grown, brushy areas.
- When hiking in wooded areas, stay in the middle of trails.
- Consider using insect repellent, according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Tuck pant leg into socks, wear long-sleeved shirts, and closed shoes.
- Wear light-colored clothing to see the ticks easier for removal.

- When returning indoors, shower using a wash cloth or puff to remove any unattached ticks.
- Examine yourself, children, and pets for ticks when returning indoors.
- Talk to your veterinarian to find out how to protect your pets from tick bites.

For more information about ticks and tick-borne diseases, including what to do if you find a tick, visit the DPH website at www.ct.gov/dph/ticks or call (860) 509-7995.

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 www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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