

NEWS



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For Immediate Release

For more information, contact the Office of the
Orange County Commissioner of Health at 291-2330

OC Health Department Reminds Residents to take Precautions against Ticks *May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month*

Goshen – As the weather gets warmer and the grass gets taller, the ticks get more active. Orange County Commissioner of Health, Dr. Jean M. Hudson, reminds residents that simple steps can be taken to protect against exposure to deer tick bites.

“Avoiding a tick bite in the first place is the best line of defense and critical to the prevention of Lyme Disease,” said Dr. Hudson. “After spending time outdoors, it’s important to do a thorough tick check of yourself, your children, and your pets.”

Tips for Avoiding Tick Bites:

- Carefully check your entire body at the end of each day or first thing in the morning, especially if pets sleep on the bed. Pay special attention to scalp, hairline, ears, armpits, waistband area, groin, and behind the knees. Run your fingers over the skin to feel for tiny bumps that may feel like a scab, but may actually be a feeding tick.
- Avoid areas where ticks are most abundant, including wooded areas, tall grass, brush, bushes, and leaf litter. Clear dead or rotting vegetation away from your home and rake up fallen leaves.
- If you go into those areas, be sure to wear protective clothing. Light-colored clothing is best as you’ll be able to spot ticks that are crawling on you. Tuck shirt into pants and pants into socks. Upon returning home, do thorough tick checks, remove clothing, turn inside out, and put them in clothes dryer on high heat for 20 minutes to kill any ticks clinging to fabric. A sticky lint roller or tape can also be used to capture any clinging ticks.

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- Ticks should be removed as soon as possible. If ticks are removed within 24 hours of attaching, the risk of getting Lyme disease is minimal.

If a tick is found attached to the skin, remove it with care. Ticks attach to the skin by their mouthpiece and can feed for days.

“Ticks should never be removed with fingers, chemicals, petroleum jelly, matches, or lighters,” cautioned Dr. Hudson. “Chemicals, heat, or squeezing the body of an attached tick can force the bacteria that causes Lyme disease into the site.”

Ticks should **only** be removed with fine pointed tweezers or forceps, pulling upward, with a steady, gentle force. If the mouthpiece breaks off just remove it as you would a splinter. Apply antiseptic to the site after tick removal, wash hands thoroughly, and contact your healthcare provider.

For more information on Lyme Disease and its prevention, call the Orange County Department of Health at 845-568-5285.

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