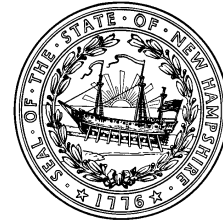


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Issues Reminder about Disease Prevention Efforts for Upcoming Tick Season in New Hampshire

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) is reminding residents that tick season is upon us again and people should take precautions to prevent being bitten and potentially exposed to Lyme disease or other illnesses. There were 1,342 cases of Lyme identified in the State in 2010 and 1,300 in 2011, which is down from the high of almost 1,600 in 2008. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there were 22,561 cases in the United States in 2010, which is down from the high in 2009 of almost 30,000, and New Hampshire has one of the highest incidence rates in the country.

Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdoferi* and is transmitted to people by the bite of an infected black-legged tick (also known as the deer tick). The greatest risk for Lyme is between the months of May and August when the black-legged tick is in the juvenile stage; it's the size of a poppy seed and very difficult to detect, so individuals may be unaware they have been bitten. Ticks that transmit Lyme can also transmit other diseases, such as anaplasmosis and babesiosis. Although not as common as Lyme, both diseases can also cause illness.

"We understand people are anxious to get outside and enjoy the spring weather after the long winter," said DPHS Director of Public Health Dr. José Montero. "While we encourage outdoor activity, we want everyone to consistently take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families from becoming ill from this disease."

Symptoms of Lyme disease include fever, headache, fatigue, and often a skin rash that is round and/or looks like a bullseye. Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics, but if left untreated can lead to severe headaches and neck pain caused by meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord), pain and swelling in the large joints, shooting pains that may interfere with sleep, and heart palpitations and dizziness.

DHHS recommends taking the following precautions to prevent tick bites:

- Avoid tick-infested areas such as overgrown grass, brush, and leaf litter
- Use insect repellent labeled as effective against ticks
- Wear protective clothing (long pants and long sleeves to keep ticks off skin)

- more -

- Do tick checks on yourself and family members after being outdoors
- Reduce ticks around your home by keeping grass short and removing leaf litter
- Speak with your healthcare provider if you are bitten by a tick or if you notice a large round rash anywhere on you

For more information about Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases visit the DHHS website at www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/lyme/index.htm or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html.

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