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MEDIA RELEASE

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Michigan Tick Season and Lyme Disease

Tick season in Michigan typically runs from March to November. In Michigan, blacklegged ticks are active anytime outdoor temperatures are above 40° F. Ticks feed on the blood of animals, such as deer, rodents, rabbits, birds, and will bite humans too. Ticks can live in grassy or wooded areas as well as on animals they feed off.

Frequent tick checks during this time of year increase the likelihood of finding a tick before it can transmit disease. The CDC recommends checking for ticks in and around the hair, in and around the ears, under the arms, inside the belly button, between the legs, and the back of the knees. If you see a tick, remove it immediately using tweezers. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin.

The most common ticks in the United States are:

- Blacklegged ticks - which can carry the organism known to cause Lyme disease.
- Lone Star ticks - which can carry the organism that causes tularemia.
- American dog ticks - which can carry the organism that causes Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Lyme disease is an emerging disease in Michigan; therefore, local risk for Lyme disease varies depending on whether infected ticks are in the area. Several local and state agencies partner to conduct surveillance for Lyme disease in people and animals, and maps of state-wide risk assessments can be found on the MDHHS tick website.

Many tickborne diseases can be treated if caught early. If you have a history of tick bites, that can be an important piece of information to share with any primary healthcare providers that may work with you. Additionally, residents can protect themselves and their families and pets just by keeping a few simple prevention strategies in mind.

Prevention Strategies

Avoid areas with a lot of ticks

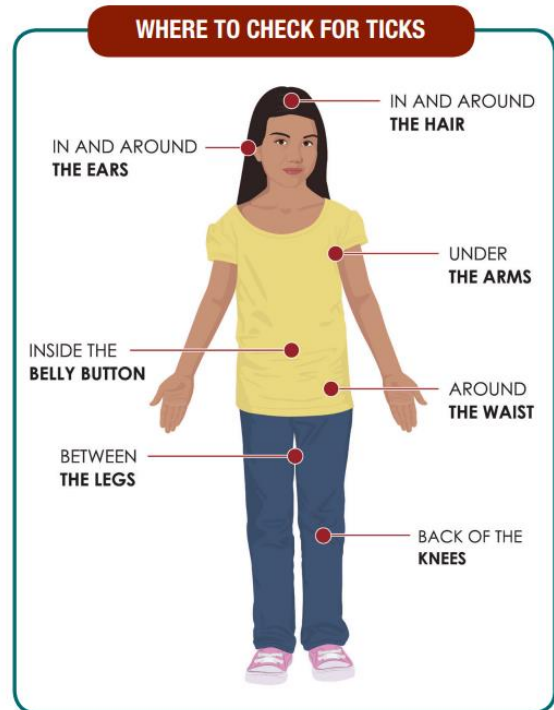
- Ticks like shady, moist areas in wooded and grassy locations. Be extra careful in warmer months (April-September) when ticks are most active.
- When spending time in areas with ticks, try to stay on well groomed trails and avoid contact with high grass, brush and ground that's covered in fallen leaves.

Check your skin and clothes for ticks every day

- Wear light-colored clothing so ticks can be spotted easily.
- Perform tick checks after being outdoors, even in your own yard. Use a mirror to inspect all parts of your body carefully, including your armpits, scalp, and groin.
- Shower soon after coming indoors to find and wash off ticks.
- Remove ticks from your clothes before going indoors. To kill ticks that you may have missed, place clothes in a dryer on high heat for at least ten.

Use of insect repellents

- Insect repellents can be applied to clothing and skin –
 - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved repellents registered for ticks include products containing:
 - DEET
 - Picaridin
 - Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus
- Store repellents away from children and pets and follow label guidelines for proper application.
- For children, spray repellent onto your own hands and then apply it to the child's skin, avoiding the hands, eyes, nose, and mouth.



If you would like more information on ticks, tick-borne diseases, or how to protect yourself, please visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/ticks or the MDHHS Emerging Diseases website at <http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases>.

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